

January/February 2024

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

As we move through this particularly challenging time, with so much unrest and uncertainty, we read this, from feminist and social justice advocate L.R. Knost:

Hope & Healing

“Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.”

A hopeful outlook—the recognition that the future can be different from the present, the ability and inclination to shift attention toward what is still good and possible, and the energy to start moving in that positive direction—has been shown to be a predictor of better psychological, educational, professional, interpersonal and health-related outcomes. Being hopeful is good for us.

“To be hopeful in bad times is not being foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of competition and cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness ... If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places ... where people have behaved magnificently, it energizes us to act ... And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”

—Howard Zinn (historian, author, professor, playwright and activist), 2004

Having hope, staying hopeful, hoping against all hope. We talk about hope in many different ways—and we usually have a good sense of ourselves (or others) as being pretty hopeful, or not so much ... There are other words that we relate to hope, like “having a positive outlook,” or “being optimistic,” but the word *hope*, the full definition used by

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image by August Stolba

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Where does hope come from? Often, for me, it comes from a recognition of connection and possibility. In October Jean Sullivan and I traveled to the Five Oaks Retreat Centre outside of Toronto for the Retreat Center Collaboration (RCC) annual gathering. The RCC is a network of more than 350 retreat centers across North America. These centers, large and small, are dedicated to transforming consciousness and caring for people and creation. Each—like one of the colored fragments inside a kaleidoscope—may have a slightly different shape and color, but seen together there is

great beauty.

The RCC is a network of change agents and healers. And each of us connected to Prairiewoods is also part of that luminous network, stretching across this continent. Imagine yourself as a thread, woven so intentionally into this fabric. It is a fabric that is illuminated not just by hope but in fact by deep faith in what is possible. This is a web of humans who are exploring the paths to resilience in people, communities and the earth. This energizes me even when the news is difficult and the weather is extreme.

“Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up.”

—David Orr

Imagine if every retreat center has at least 10,000 relationships, just as we do. We are now part of a web of life that touches over 3 million people and 14,000 acres of land. I imagine a constellation of several million lights across the globe, lighting our way into a different future.

Now it is time for us to activate the Prairiewoods networks to spread hope and shape a better future, for us and for the generations that follow us. This coming spring, we hope you will join with us as we gather people across eastern Iowa to explore how we can work together and take action to address environmental justice and the climate crisis. In the meantime, let us all set an intention to “regreen” the earth and heal our relationships with ourselves and each other.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright



Prairiewoods is an 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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the scientists and psychologists who have studied hope (Snyder, Lopez, 2002), comes down to three things:

- Imagining that the future can be different from the present—and maybe even better.
- Imagining that we can do something about it—we have a part in creating that future.
- Imagining the pathways it will take to get from here, the present, to there, the future.

As Howard Zinn articulates so well, the shift from despair to even the smallest sliver of hope comes down to where we focus our attention. Do we focus on what has gone wrong, how much worse things are than the way we remember and how insurmountable the problems we see appear to be? Or, do we shift our focus to what is still good, what is still possible and how we might work with those things to move toward a brighter future?

Being hopeful does not ignore or downplay the challenges and trauma that are the very real and difficult everyday experiences of people and the planet. Howard Zinn, quoted on page 1, lived his early life in poverty, spent time engaged in challenging and dangerous work in the shipyards (leading to his work with unions) and flew bombing missions while in the Air Force during World War II (leading to his support of movements for peace). Eventually he made his way to activism during the Civil Rights movement and to history as a professor at Spelman College and then Boston University. How do we, each in our own way, keep moving forward, maintaining a hopeful outlook?

We begin by placing individual and collective healing at the very center of our purpose. We begin by enhancing the conditions that create movement toward wellbeing. We begin by creating a healthy environment where people live, work and play. Those are not small or simply achieved goals—but each of us only need turn our attention to the opportunities that surface in our lives for hope-filled action (Ginwright, *Healing Centered Engagement*,

2015).

How do we move from here to there? *How do we cultivate hope in ourselves and in our community* (Scharff, 2020)?

- Spiritual engagement—we recognize and develop our relationship with something greater than ourselves, lifting up our deep sense of purpose for our lives.
- Mindfulness—as we move through our day-to-day lives, we focus our awareness on our experience of the present moment.
- Relationships—we connect with others who are supportive and bring joy into our lives.
- Choosing joy—we make time for engaging in activities that bring us joy.
- Helping—we watch for opportunities to help others, both one-on-one and through collective action.
- Gratitude—we acknowledge the good that is in our lives and feel and express our gratitude.

All of these may have, at another point in our lives, seemed like nice things to do; now we see them as necessary ways we can maintain the strength to stay engaged, heal from painful experiences and remain hopeful about our collective, interdependent future.



image by August Stolba

New Intentions for the New Year

As the year begins, we often turn our attention to new habits. This year consider which practices will build your resilience and hopefulness for the journey ahead. First begin by acknowledging that you are enough. Just as you are. You come from Light, and your life brings light to the world.

To be resilient is to be adaptable in the face of change and to grow from each new challenge. It requires practice like learning to play an instrument or enhancing your physical fitness. What will help you to build a rhythm of practice? Perhaps it is a ritual or a regular program. The recipe for your journey is uniquely your own.

“Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.”

—Eckhart Tolle

Research tells us that gratitude is good for us. And it only takes a small effort to reap the benefits. Finding a few moments in the day to note what or who we are grateful for is enough. What will help you create a positive gratitude practice? Some have created containers to “hold” their gratitude reflections and to remind them to spend a few moments in reflection.

“Trees heal.”

—Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*

69% of young people aged 13 to 25 experience the sacred in nature (*Religion News*, Nov. 7, 2023). And research suggests that just two hours in nature measurably improves human well-being. Walk our trails or participate in Forest Bathing. Get a dose of nature and feel your heart lift.

“It is the awareness that is primary.”

—Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Mindfulness for Beginners*

Make space for quiet and contemplation in your life. Participate in a Day of Self Renewal to get started, or join Chris Klug for Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.

“All we can know for sure is that a mystery courses through us, seeking its own fullest incarnation, and that whenever we serve the mystery within, we experience a linkage to the mystery outside. When we stand in more conscious relationship to this mystery, we are more deeply alive.”

—James Hollis

Make time to engage in contemplation. Explore your purpose. Be with the questions. Walk the labyrinth on your own or schedule a walk with a group.

Whatever you choose, may it nourish your soul and fill you with hope for the days ahead.





Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light

Blessed are you who bear the light in unbearable times,
Who testify to its endurance amid the unendurable,
Who bear witness to its persistence when everything
seems in shadow and grief.

Blessed are you in whom the light lives,
In whom the brightness blazes—your heart a chapel,
An altar where in the deepest night can be seen the fire
that shines forth in you

In unaccountable faith, in stubborn hope,
In love that illumines every broken thing it finds.

—Jan Richardson, from “Circle of Grace”

Pathways of Peace: Renewal in Everyday Life

Opening Retreat: Friday, Jan. 26, 6:30 p.m.—Saturday, Jan. 27, 4 p.m.

Sabbatical Days: Fridays; Feb. 23, March 22 & April 19; 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Closing Retreat: Friday, May 17, 6:30 p.m.—Saturday, May 18, 4 p.m.

Have you ever longed for time to step away and explore how you might achieve a more mindful and purposeful life? We all need dedicated breaks to rest and rekindle our energy and sense of direction. According to the testimony of those who have done it and Harvard Business Review, sabbaticals can be transformative. Time away allows us to heal, reconnect with important relationships, explore and ultimately embrace a more authentic life. But many of you have told us it is a struggle to carve out time. You may not have the option to take extended time away from work for a month or more. You feel the pressure to balance work, family and everyday life.

All of us benefit from tending to our spiritual life and

spending time in quiet reflection. The Center for Creative Leadership research suggests that we become more resilient when we rest, practice gratitude, reappraise our mental models, savor the sweet things, engage our senses and make time for mindfulness (source: www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/8-steps-help-become-resilient). In this five-month program, you will have the opportunity to sample practices and integrate them into daily life. This series of days is designed to help you balance all that your life contains and take the time to nourish your body, mind and spirit.

Participants will enjoy two overnight retreats and three sabbatical days, designed to renew your energy, enhance your perspective and provide opportunities to learn practices that will help you build a life you don't need to escape. Each sabbatical day will include the chance to learn new skills, spend time in quiet reflection (indoors and out), and receive two individual services such as massage or spiritual direction. Join the cohort that begins in January!

Fee: \$1,000 (deposit of \$250 due at registration)

Spirituality in the 21st Century

Prairiewoods Spirituality in the 21st Century 2024

Friday, April 26, 6–8 p.m., & Saturday, April 27, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

in person in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, & online via Zoom

“Somewhere between the eighty-five-year-old Tibetan Buddhist leader [the Dalai Lama] and the eighteen-year-old activist [Greta Thunberg], between the sage legacy and the whole life ahead, is where the rest of us must come in. And we must.”

—Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*, p. 3

The Pew Research Center has found that most of us are sad or anxious about the climate crisis. According to Paul Hawken, one of the most hopeful antidotes to this is to pay attention to the growing movement of self-organized congregations and groups dedicated to change (Wu, p. 86). Hope comes from seeing ourselves as part of this larger whole.

Join us April 26–27, 2024, to be inspired by and learn from leaders who are committed to creating a hopeful and regenerative future. We encourage you to come with your friends, your congregation or whatever group of committed humans to which you belong. Get inspired, get informed and get into action!

Susan Bauer-Wu, PhD, RN, FAAN, (virtual) is the president of the Mind & Life Institute, which serves as the primary convener, catalyst and community builder for the contemplative sciences. Her new book, *A Future We Can Love: How We Can Reverse the Climate Crisis with the Power of Our Hearts and Minds*, shares the words of the Dalai Lama and Greta Thunberg in dialogue with climate scientists, activists and spiritual leaders as they start a world-changing conversation. Learn more at www.mindandlife.org/person/susan-bauer-wu.

Rev. Veronica M. Johnson serves as Outreach Director for Faith in Place, whose mission is to “empower people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to be leaders in advancing environmental and racial justice, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.” She has a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering and a master of divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. She currently serves as co-pastor of Hyde Park Union Church. She has served previously in the Baptist, AME and UCC churches, and is the former president of the council for the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago.

Leah Rampy, PhD, is a writer, speaker, retreat leader and educator who weaves ecology, spirituality, personal stories and practices to encourage others to deepen their relationship to the natural world. She recently authored the book *Earth & Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos* to be released in early 2024. She is a frequent speaker on contemplative leadership and spiritual ecology for these edge times. She has previously served as the Executive Director for Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, where she continues as an adjunct staff member. She is the founder and leader of Church of the Wild Two Rivers that meets regularly to deepen spirituality through time in the natural world. Leah offers retreats through Friends of Silence and for the Center for Spirituality in Nature, where she also serves as the senior spiritual program leader.

“Earth and soul cry out for a conversation far deeper and more profound than that of saving our lifestyle. It is time to reweave connections for the sake of mutual thriving here and now as we teeter on the edge of even greater loss.”

—Leah Rampy, *Earth and Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos*, coming in early 2024

Please pay as led, ranging from \$25–\$150. Register a group of six and take \$50 off your total registration. Lodging is available at Prairiewoods, but space is limited. **Learn more and register at www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century.**



Retreats & Programs

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship

Friday, Jan. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Jan. 7, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Michael Pollan wrote, “What would happen, for example, if we were to start thinking about food as less of a thing and more of a relationship?” When we think of “peace” as relationships with self, others and Earth, and apply this to the food we eat, a new way of nourishing and promoting health emerges. Let’s spend the weekend together on a pathway of peace with food at the center of our table. Drawing from the spiritual wisdom of mystics, saints and poets, as well as wisdom from physiology and nutrition, we’ll reflect on how the food we choose to eat is related to the interconnectedness of all beings. Retreatants will create actionable items that support “food peace,” for health, in one’s self, in community and on this planet we call home.

Associate Professor in Food Science and Nutrition at Iowa State University and Registered Dietitian Christina Campbell researches prenatal lifestyle choices on the health of mothers and children and the intersection of food and peace. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in medical nutrition therapy, reducing consumer food waste, the U.S. food system and sustainable diets. Prairiewoods’ Coordinator of Spiritual Services Ann Jackson, PBVM, blends eco-spirituality, literature, and leadership in service to individual spiritual direction and group facilitation. Ann delights in listening with others to the energy of Spirit stirring creativity, passion, discernment and service.

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

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



Pathways of Peace: Awakening Awareness of Energy

Friday, Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Feb. 25, 1 p.m.

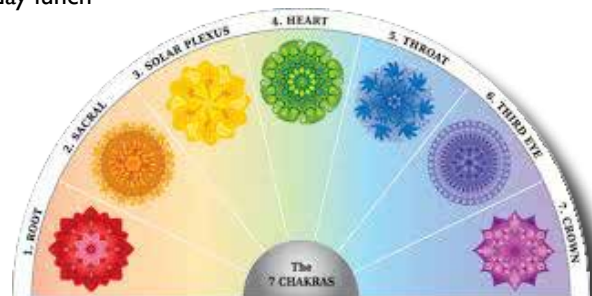
Facilitators: Tammy Bayer & Ann Jackson, PBVM

We host seven different energy centers in our bodies. Scientific research and some spiritual traditions cite that each energy center corresponds to a particular stage of life. This experiential retreat will invite women of all ages to deeper understanding of the body’s energies and engage meditative practices to integrate the mind, body and spirit for healing and wholeness. Utilizing wisdom from many resources, among them, *The 7 Healing Chakras: Unlocking Your Body’s Energy Centers* by Brenda Davies, M.D., retreatants will potentially move through past experiences to rest in the present and animate possibility.

Tammy Bayer brings an enthusiasm for life to all of her work. She has a background in education and over 20 years of experience as a doula working with growing families. Tammy is a yoga and meditation teacher and a retreat leader who finds joy in supporting women through transformative life experiences. Ann Jackson, PBVM, is Prairiewoods’ coordinator of spiritual services and blends eco-spirituality, literature and leadership in service to individual spiritual direction and group facilitation. Ann delights in listening with others to the energy of Spirit stirring creativity, passion, discernment and service.

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

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



For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

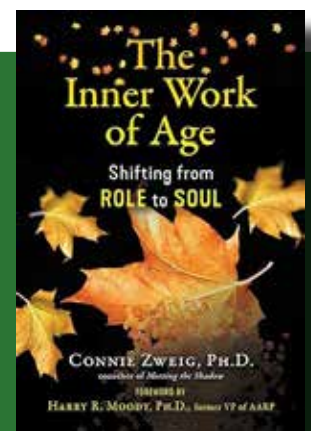
Book Review

Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul by Connie Zweig, PhD

What if we could reimagine aging? How might we cross the threshold from ROLE to SOUL and support this transition that involves not just shifting roles, but reflecting on the soulful, internal changes in identity, meaning and purpose? Enlightened by the wisdom of Eastern and Western influences, retired psychotherapist Connie Zweig, PhD, animates the spirit of aging in her book *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from ROLE to SOUL*.

Zweig offers wisdom to consciously move deeper and more expansively. She cites themes of aging and invites reflection around personal and societal biases, various stages of awareness,

subtle yearnings and gratitude regarding retirement (refirement), the shadows of age and gifts of eldership. The book also highlights spiritual practices from many faith traditions to assist in healing through illness, reviewing life and preparing for death. This could be a great gift for anyone in the second half of life. It’s a book to be “reflected,” not simply read.



—review by Ann Jackson, PBVM

You will find many great reads in our Gift Shop. Come in to find new inspiration!

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Online Information Session:

Tuesday, Dec. 19, 7–8 p.m.

Nine-Week Series: Sundays, Jan. 7–March 3, 1:30–4 p.m.

Extended Retreat Day: Sunday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

Mindfulness is the power of mind to be deeply aware of what's happening—without commentary or interference. Research reveals numerous benefits to the nervous system, emotions and general sense of well-being.

Over nine weeks, the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program will cultivate the skill of mindfulness through

formal meditation practices and informal integrative practices. This series consists of a two-and-a-half-hour class each week with one extended six-and-a-half-hour class. If you want to participate, please attend a free online information session.

Fee: \$400 for the nine-week series (*Those working in the human service field may register for just \$100!*)



Day of Self Renewal

Thursdays, Jan. 4 & Feb. 1, &

Mondays, Jan. 8 & Feb. 12,

8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

This popular program is now offered twice a month!

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, Singing Bowl Prayer or Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Depending on the date, you may choose from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, qigong, yoga or chair yoga. Visit www.Prairiewoods.org for details.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three service choices are required eight days in advance.

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

Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace

Thursdays, Jan. 4–Feb. 29,

12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Based on age-old Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), this gentle and accessible class involves meditative, healing

energy and compassion-based standing movement, breath work, visualization, acupuncture and seated practice. We begin by opening, rebalancing and cultivating Qi (universal life force energy-Spirit) throughout the body's energy pathways, centers and organs to assist with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Wisdom from the Tao Te Ching, TCM Five Element Theory and beyond is sprinkled in to assist your practice of living life with greater ease, peace and harmony with the rest of nature. Class ends with seated meditation, which includes sending healing compassionate intention to others and the planet.

Fee: \$12 per session



Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep

Thursdays, Jan. 4 & Feb. 1,

1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing, penetrating power of healing sound and vibration via singing bowls. Then drop into deepest levels of relaxation and peace through authentic, age-old Yogic Sleep (*Yoga Nidra*)—a reclined, meditative experience used by stress reduction clinics, integrative health care and mystics who savor resting in blissful

Oneness with The Sacred. We will close with prayerful sound healing, including a lower-octave bowl played on or near (your choice) the shrine of your heart.

Fee: \$10



On the Cusp of Change: Where Memory & Imagination Meet

Saturday, Jan. 6, 10:30–1 p.m., &

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

Life is made of change. It always has been. But in the 21st century, the changes come faster and closer together. How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and to better understand our choices in living with change, whether it's personal or global? This yearlong series of twelve stand-alone online programs and three in-person retreats takes a deeper dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of the present day. The Jan. 6 opening online retreat, attuned to the start of a new year, introduces the dynamics of living with change. On the second Tuesday of each month thereafter, Karen will lead an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus of how to make change more trustworthy. (The Feb. 13 topic is Letting Go.) Three optional in-person retreats at the Christine Center and Prairiewoods in the spring, summer (a focused retreat for writers) and fall are open to all, whether you've participated online or not.

Fee: \$25 for January retreat, \$15 for monthly sessions

Singing Bowl Prayer

Mondays, Jan. 8 & Feb. 12,

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 let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. Registration is required by noon.

Fee: \$10

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Groups

Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them): Wednesdays, Jan. 10 & Feb. 14, 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: Wednesdays, Jan. 17 & Feb. 21, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW

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. These monthly grief groups are open to anyone grieving loss through death.

- On the second Wednesday of each month, children and the adults who support them are invited to explore a different creative art medium.
- The third Wednesday of each month is for adults.

In January, we'll use different art mediums to express our feelings and visually represent what they might look like. Words have limits, but art can help to express our emotions when words become difficult to find. In February, we will take pieces of mosaic tile and glue them onto wooden photo frames, just as piece by piece we build a lifetime of memories. The pieces can be random, or they can make a specific design. Registration is required one week in advance. This group is now only offered in person.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (*dinner also will be provided for the family-centered group*)

Cosmogenesis: Where to Begin? **Friday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Jan. 13, 5 p.m.**

Facilitator: Ann Jackson, PBVM

Drawing from both science and spirituality, this overnight retreat will help us unpack evolutionary advances that may inspire us as humans to create a more equitable, joyful, sustainable world. We will trace the Universe Story and learn, explore and discover practical spiritual practices that may help us to consciously create more harmony, fulfillment and contentment in the world. Resourcing the wisdom of Brian Swimme and Matthew Fox through videos and the book *Cosmogenesis: An Unveiling of the Expanding Universe*, we will explore the intricately intertwined relationship between our individual lives and the life of the cosmos.

Fee: \$150 includes sessions, Friday night lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch
Commuter Fee: \$100 includes sessions and Saturday lunch

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations

Mondays; Jan. 15, Feb. 5 & Feb. 19; 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 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. Registration is required.

Fee: \$12

Indigenous Food & Agriculture: Past, Present & Future **Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7–8:15 p.m.**

Facilitator: Dan Cornelius

This event via Zoom is co-sponsored by Shalom Spirituality Center; Food, Faith, and Farming Network; Holy Wisdom Monastery and Prairiewoods. Dan Cornelius, a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, is the Outreach Program Manager for the University of Wisconsin Law School's Great Lakes Indigenous Law Center and UW-Madison's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, where he works on the development of producer cooperatives, supply chain analysis, and legal and policy aspects of food and agriculture.

Fee: \$10

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony **Saturdays, Jan. 20 & Feb. 17, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2, ceremony starts at 4)**

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

The Sweat Lodge Ceremony pre-dates recorded history and was practiced in some form by every culture in the world.



These sweats were held for reasons ranging from relaxation and socialization to healing and purification. Join us for a sweat focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing. During the ceremony, we sit on the earth in the lodge, a small dome-shaped structure. Heated stones are placed in the center of the lodge and the water pourer, or leader, pours water over the stones to create steam. There are four rounds that include the singing of sacred songs, and after each round the lodge door is opened for more stones to be brought in. *Please note that the lodge is a small enclosure that is dark and extremely hot inside. If you have claustrophobia or any medical conditions that prevent you from going into a sauna, you should not*

What Is Spiritual Direction/ Spiritual Companionship Information Sessions **Wednesday, Jan. 17, 10–11 a.m., & Wednesday, Feb. 14, 4–5 p.m.**

Spiritual Directors/Companions: Rev. Rose Blank; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Spiritual direction/spiritual companionship is a time-honored conversation and listening session between two people in which one person consults another spiritually experienced and trained listener about the ways in which the Source of All Being (God, Divine, Love, Universe, Holy, Buddha, Allah ...) may be moving in their life. It crosses all ancient spiritual traditions. Its aim is to empower us to explore a deeper experience of that Source of All Being through the experienced and compassionate company of another human being. The benefits include:

- cultivating the skill of deep listening
- articulating experiences of the Divine
- exploring various spiritual practices and resources
- engaging in discernment and exploring spiritual questions

Come learn more about this incredible resource! You are invited to join us in person or online via Zoom. Remain for as long as you like within the hour.

Fee: Free

participate in this ceremony. Please visit our website for safety protocols and to register. You will be asked to sign a release form.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 to Prairiewoods for materials

Labyrinth Walk **Sunday, Feb. 4, 2–4 p.m.**

Facilitator: Leslie Wright

Come walk the indoor labyrinth with us! All are welcome and no experience is required.

We will provide some brief guidance at the beginning for those who may be new to this practice or have been away from it for a while.



Labyrinths have been around for thousands of years. The circle and the path are symbols found across cultures and religious traditions. The labyrinth and other spiritual practices help to ground us during unsettled times when our foundations seem to shift; sometimes we can't think our way out of or to something, and sometimes we need another way of being. When engaging with or praying a labyrinth, a person travels on a single path where the way in is the same as the way out. The labyrinth can be a metaphor for how we walk through life and the situations that may currently be confronting us. In her book *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, Lauren Artress presents a four-fold path for praying the labyrinth:

- Remembering: Be open as you begin, notice what comes and remember you are loved.
- Releasing: On the way to the center, release those things that are causing you pain and confusion.
- Receiving: Enjoy the center, be still and linger. Take a deep breath. Receive what God has for you.
- Returning: Move back out into the world, more replenished, grounded, empowered, receiving a kindness and mercy. Look for an invitation with God to do the work in the world that is yours to do.

Fee: Free-will offering

Rock Mandala Painting for the Whole Family

Saturday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Spend a few hours creating art with your favorite people! 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.)

Fee: \$15 per person includes all supplies

Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga

Mondays & Thursdays; Jan. 4–Feb. 29; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga) & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga.

Fee: \$120 for eleven-punch card, \$72 for six-punch card or \$15 for single class

Go Deeper Thursdays

Thursdays, Jan. 4–Feb. 29, 4–5 p.m.

Convener: Ellen Bruckner

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics via Zoom.

Fee: Free-will offering

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton

first & third Thursdays; Jan. 4, Jan. 18, Feb. 1 & Feb. 15; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz

Practice contemplative living to respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections over Zoom.

Fee: Free-will offering

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers

second Tuesdays, Jan. 9 & Feb. 13, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, Jan. 24 & Feb. 28, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity.

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer

second & fourth Tuesdays; Jan. 9, Jan. 23, Feb. 13 & Feb. 27; 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith

Practice a contemplative prayer form of prayer to help deepen your relationship with God.

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith

second & fourth Thursdays; Jan. 11, Jan. 25, Feb. 8 & Feb. 22; 4–5:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linzy Martin

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes, either in person or via Zoom.

Fee: Free-will offering

Help Support Our Newsletter

Here are two ways you can help us be good stewards of our resources and produce a beautiful, informative and inspiring newsletter:

1. **Contribute a free-will offering of \$10.** Your gift of \$10 pays for a full year of newsletters delivered to you electronically or by mail. If you would like to make this gift, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate and mark "Newsletter" in the notes field, mail a check to Prairiewoods or call 319-395-6700 with your credit card information.
2. **Read your bimonthly newsletter online.** If you are willing to switch from paper to electronic, please scan the QR code at left with your phone's camera and give us your name, address and email address. We'll do the rest! (You can also call us at 319-395-6700 or email ecospirit@prairiewoods.org and we can make the change for you.) *Thank you for all you do to support Prairiewoods' mission!*



Kathy Broghammer is a certified sound healing practitioner through the Atma Buti Sound and Vibrational School in Boulder, Colorado, and facilitates our Singing Bowl Prayer and Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations sessions.



Kathy says, "In my singing bowl sessions, I offer crystal bowls merging with a variety of Himalayan bowls and gongs to bring waves of restoration and tranquility to the mind and body. I believe the singing bowls are a tool for transformation and healing, which is ongoing. By playing and offering singing bowls to others, I listen and hold space for others to reach their own magical place."

Some of her session attendees have said that the singing bowls: "brought peace and tranquility to my inner world. Has helped heal trauma and pain. Has increased my awareness and intuition. Saved me from depression and hopelessness."

"I felt a deep trance-like relaxation. Vibration and sounds penetrated my whole being."

"Clearer thinking, profound relaxation, mentally and physically. Always wanting to return for more in this intense demanding world."



Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel facilitates our Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace as well as Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep sessions. She also leads retreats at Prairiewoods. She was introduced to yoga by her mom in the 1970s and then went on to get teacher certifications in yoga, Qigong, healing and sound therapies, and more.

Catherine says that she "helps others experience healing peace, well-being and greater awareness of Oneness with The Sacred including within themselves and the rest of nature in this One Reality of which we all are part. Offered are meditative, energy-based mind-body-Spirit practices and related East-West spiritual wisdom."

"What I love about teaching Qigong (Qi = life force energy Spirit and gong = to cultivate and work with) is that most people who say they can't meditate, let alone feel energy, are able to by the end of our first class. That said, I've seen this class be a life changer for people. Especially as they take tools they learn from class with them, including energy medicine insights from Traditional Chinese Medicine through various acupressure points, flows, breathing practices, healing sounds, etc. As for Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep, it is humbling to be part of an experience which takes people into a very profound experience of rest, bliss and healing peace."

Heather English teaches gentle and chair yoga classes and first became interested in yoga when she was exploring alternative modalities for dealing with infertility. She says, "Following a career change, I took a deep dive into yoga for the potential mental health benefits it could offer. After taking teacher training, I began to consider the possibility that I might have something unique to share with yoga students."

Heather says, "Gentle yoga is a practice done at a slow and relaxing pace. It's not that we don't do 'hard' poses, but that we don't 'force' any pose. Chair yoga as we practice it is much the same. It includes seated and standing postures done both with and without the use of a chair."



"I encourage students to be curious about their bodies rather than judgmental. So often we get caught thinking about what our bodies 'should' do or what they used to be able to do—and none of this is really helpful as our bodies are always changing. Each time we get on our yoga mats, we are meeting our bodies for the first time. I want students to greet their bodies with curiosity and grace."

"Sometimes students will share with me their personal victories that they attribute to practicing yoga. As the ones who are committing time and energy to their yoga practice, I know that they have done all of the work to positively impact their own lives. I also know that just spending time at Prairiewoods has positively impacted us all and that we are so fortunate to be able to practice yoga and enjoy our little yoga community in such an amazing place."

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list of donors and volunteers, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate.



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



As we enter this New Year and the light begins to grow each day, let us all reflect on the words of Albert Einstein to his daughter as he described the unifying force that "includes and governs all":

"This universal force is LOVE ... Love is Light, that enlightens those who give and receive it ... Love is power, because it multiplies the best we have, and allows humanity not to be extinguished in their blind selfishness. Love unfolds and reveals."

May you be warmed by the light of love and guided on your way this coming year.



Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

*Reweaving
Connections •
Cultivating Hope •
Taking Action*

Each year, Spirituality in the 21st Century invites speakers and community members to come together to explore and expand our thinking about our spirituality and relationships with ourselves, others, Creation and the Source of All Being. Last year, Jeremy Lent explored the intersections of science and ancient wisdom. His words called us to work toward an ecological civilization. This year, we continue this important exploration. We will focus on how we can awaken to possibilities, become more resilient in the face of complex challenges and create change.

Our speakers will help us remember three things:

- Even in the face of complex challenges like the climate crisis, we can cultivate hope.
- Solutions will emerge from our connections, not in isolation.
- The accumulation of simple actions can have a transformative effect.

“*Hope is ‘that virtue by which we take responsibility for the future.’*”

—Lyanda L. Haupt, *Rooted*, p. 36

How might we cultivate hope? The Pew Research Center has found that most of us are sad or anxious about the climate crisis. We are uncertain about the future, and our fears often cause us to turn away from that which seems

beyond our ability to control. Greta Thunberg reminds us that uncertainty is the home of possibility. In order to reorient ourselves to possibility, it will be essential to examine our perspectives, remain curious and practice compassion.

Paul Hawken suggests that one of the most hopeful antidotes in these difficult times is to pay attention to the growing movement of self-organized congregations and groups dedicated to change (Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*, p. 86). Hope comes from seeing ourselves as part of this larger whole. Many writers speak of community connections and limit it to people. Reconnecting with the Earth community is as important as attending to what’s happening in the human community—perhaps more so, as those relationships have been neglected for so long by many of us.

Out of these connections, we begin to understand the actions we are called to take. From that, we glimpse the possibilities that are more than we will ever comprehend—and hope arises.

“*The difficulty is that with the rise of the modern sciences, we began to think of the universe as a collection of objects rather than as a communion of subjects.*”

—Thomas Berry

(continued on page 3)

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I sit here writing to you in the cold darkness of a mid-January morning. Everything and everyone seems to be asleep. But you will be reading this as we head into March and April. The time of year we often speak of as a reawakening of the Earth. I don't want to create too ponderous a metaphor—but it seems such a good way to think about our current times. We have been asleep and are now awakening. This awakening is to our relationship with all creation. Many of us, myself included, are rediscovering what our elders and St. Francis told us so long ago.

In the coming months, I encourage you to reflect upon two themes in this “awakening” subject. Both involve love. Joel Sartore, creator of The Photo Ark, has been quoted as saying, “You can't save what you don't love.” Prairiewoods was founded on a deep love for the Earth and the Source of All Being. We know from experience that visitors and guests experience that deep love, even if they cannot name it, when they are here on the land. Our challenge now is to offer that experience to as many people as possible. That felt experience of profound connection is truly transformative.

This profound connection reveals the second theme to which we must attend: how deeply we are—and have been—embraced and cared for by Creation. We have been fed and forgiven by the Earth. We have been held even when we have forgotten our right relationship with our brothers and sisters and all created beings. We have stressed and tested this beautiful home we call Earth. Now it is time for us to reawaken to who we are and what we are called to do. We are called to love creation as we have been loved.

I do not say this from a place of darkness. I say this energized by a powerful sense of hope and possibility. People everywhere are yearning for this. If we all lean into the creative power of the Universe instead of blindly extracting from it, we will, as Susan Bauer-Wu says, co-create a “Future We Can Love.”

“All” it requires of us is to love and be loved.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright



Grandmother Oak by Jerome Nachazel



Prairiewoods is an 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)

The Mindfulness Initiative echoes Berry’s words. They acknowledge that “climate change is a physical reality, demanding urgent political and practical solutions.” But more importantly they emphasize that “its inner dimension, overlooked entirely by mainstream approaches, is a crisis of relationship ... Lack of conscious connection with ourselves, with others and with the world we share drives this crisis.” They join the voices often heard at Spirituality in the 21st Century that have been urging us to awaken (or perhaps more accurately *reawaken*) to our place in a deeply interconnected and interdependent universe. Our individual thriving depends on the thriving of the whole.

To reawaken to these truths and build our stamina for the work ahead requires us to move toward mindfulness. This move will help us to examine our mental models of how the world works. Our western culture prizes separation; our souls know that we are interwoven into the fabric of the cosmos, deeply connected to Earth. When we fray these connections, we are caught in loneliness and grief for this loss of kinship—whether we realize it or not. This is Thomas Berry’s call to incense that is aided by deepening connections to the living world around us. “It simply can’t be emphasized enough that our culturally dominant narrative of ‘separation from,’ ‘power over’ and ‘ownership of’ nature creates the mistaken belief that we can manage, technologically innovate and ‘carbon’ trade ourselves out of the evolutionary dead end we have been heading into for a couple of centuries” (Daniel Christian Wahl, *Building a Regenerative Future*, May 26, 2022).

It is time to act. Inaction has the same effect as denying the crisis. Only 27% of respondents in a recent Pew Research Center survey believe that individual Americans can do a lot to reduce climate impacts. The largest percentage appear to believe that the large businesses and corporations are responsible and able to make change. As an antidote to this sentiment, I would offer the words of Daniel Christian Wahl, who asserts that “a regenerative human impact on Earth is not only possible but has been the norm for most of our species’

deep history” (Wahl). Unless we attend first to our soul purpose—living more closely aligned with and learning from the wisdom of the living world—we risk rushing to action based on our ego needs or our rational thinking. The work to which we are called is often beyond our understanding. Discernment can guide us to action that we don’t fully understand with results that will only be apparent far beyond our lifetime.

Together we can continue to build our capacity to “co-create regenerative futures” (Wahl). The journey will be iterative and messy. We cannot allow ourselves to get waylaid by notions that there is only one solution and it will be delivered by others. We, ourselves, are the collective engines of positive and transformative change. We can create the positive networks that amplify the impact of each small effort. Reweaving our connections to each other and all of Creation will help us sustain each other for the road ahead.

Our annual Spirituality in the 21st Century event offers the opportunity to hear from three speakers deeply engaged in responding to the climate crisis and awakening our commitment to change: Susan Bauer-Wu, author of *A Future We Can Love*; Dr. Leah Rampy, former director of Shalem Institute and author of the just-released *Earth & Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos*; and Rev. Veronica Johnson, Outreach Director for Faith in Place.

Join us April 26–27 to be inspired by and learn from leaders who are committed to creating a hopeful and regenerative future. We encourage you to come with your friends, your congregation or whatever group of committed humans to which you belong and weave the connections necessary to move towards a thriving future for all.

To learn more about the speakers who will inspire us, turn to pages 6–7.



Putting Hope into Action

Is the thought of climate change becoming overwhelming to the point where you just want to give up? Do you feel like your individual choices to reduce waste and pollution are no longer making an impact? You're not alone. We're here to encourage you to remain hopeful, avoid thoughts of fear and guilt, keep yourself motivated, and celebrate your progress.

With Earth Day approaching on Monday, April 22, it's the perfect time to think about how each of us can make a positive impact on our environment through small changes in how we live. From our diet habits to our shopping and transportation choices, every small decision can be an impactful one.

Prairiewoods has always tried to lead by example, and we hope that our practices will continue to make a difference and inspire generations to come. From small things like only using cloth napkins for our meals, to big projects like our recent addition of solar panels that make us 100% solar powered, we strive to reduce our impact on the environment.

Here are some additional things that we can all do:

At Home:

- Can or preserve your own food
- Shop locally and at farmers markets
- Eat a plant-rich, vegan or Mediterranean diet
- Cook meals from scratch to reduce food packaging waste
- Make your own household cleaners
- Use alternatives to paper towels
- Invest in solar green energy at your home
- Switch to LED lighting
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use

In the Garden:

- Transition to electric lawn equipment
- Plant vegetable and herb gardens
- Compost food and lawn waste
- Reduce your turfgrass lawn by planting native plants
- Plant diverse native trees

Rethink Your Transportation:

- Drive an electric or hybrid vehicle
- Ride your bike, walk, carpool or take public transportation where possible
- Work from home when possible
- Reduce unnecessary trips
- Maintain proper tire and vehicle maintenance

Other Practices to Consider:

- Shop used or pre-worn clothing—avoid throw away fashion
- Host a clothing swap with friends
- Engage in conversation by joining local activist groups
- Speak to local representatives and vote for climate-conscious candidates
- Refuse single-use plastics and use reusable drink containers
- Take reusable grocery or produce bags to the store
- Take short showers or use energy efficient appliances
- Wash clothes with cold water and hang to dry
- Follow recycling guidelines
- Adjust your thermostat while away from home or when sleeping
- Accept electronic receipts versus paper receipts



Whether you like to follow social media, read books, listen to podcasts or volunteer, there are endless resources available with tips on how to live sustainably.

Check Out These Websites:

- zerowastechef.com
- buynothingproject.org
- zerowaste.org
- theminimalists.com
- freecycle.org/town/CedarRapidsIA
- cedar-rapids.org/local_government/sustainability/community_climate_plan.php

Get Involved:

Here are ten local nonprofits with an environmental focus:

- Sierra Club—Iowa Chapter
- Trees Forever
- Wickiup Hill Learning Center (Linn County Conservation)
- I-Renew
- Linn & Johnson County Clean Energy Districts
- Iowa Interfaith Power & Light
- Feed Iowa First
- Matthew 25 Tool Library
- Backyard Abundance
- Monarch Research Project
- Be sure to check out **EcoFest** on April 20 in the NewBo District! This is the corridor's premier Earth Day celebration. It's a family-friendly festival that includes interactive activities, eco-products, fun ways to reduce and reuse household items, local foods, arts and free live music. EcoFest helps us connect our personal choices to individual, community and planetary sustainability. We hope you'll join us!

Food for Thought:

- More plastic has been produced in the last ten years than in the whole preceding century.
- Going solar is not only good for the environment but also creates jobs here in Iowa!
- An average urban tree will sequester 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide by 40 years of age. The more urban yard and street trees we have, the more carbon we can capture!

A Message from Foundress Nancy Hoffman, FSPA:

"Each of you is an extension of Prairiewoods. Together we are making great strides in finding ways to incorporate effective ways to combat climate change. Thank you for sharing your practices, teaching us and challenging us to live and act in more sustainable and regenerative ways. All of us together are making a difference. God bless you."

Prairiewoods Spirituality in the 21st Century: Hope in Action

Friday, April 26, 7–9 p.m., & Saturday, April 27, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
(please note the updated times)

in person at Grant Wood AEA in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, & online via Zoom

The Pew Research Center has found that most of us are sad or anxious about the climate crisis. According to Paul Hawken, one of the most hopeful antidotes to this is to pay attention to the growing movement of self-organized congregations and groups dedicated to change (Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*, p. 86). Hope comes from seeing ourselves as part of this larger whole.

Join us April 26–27 to be inspired by and learn from leaders who are committed to creating a hopeful and regenerative future. We encourage you to come with your friends, your congregation or whatever group of committed humans to which you belong. *Get inspired, get informed and get into action!*

Friday, April 26

6:30 p.m. Doors to Grant Wood AEA open.

6:30 p.m. Sara Thomsen's music welcomes all into the space.

7–9 p.m. Leah Rampy opens our conversation about reweaving our connection with Earth and our own soul. She will remind us of our deep and inextricable connections to self, others and all Creation. She will help us build the fortitude and resolve necessary to plant seeds for the future and lay the stepping stones that lead toward a future of greater mutual flourishing and well-being.

Saturday, April 27

8 a.m. Doors to Grant Wood AEA open.

8:45 a.m. Sara Thomsen's music welcomes all into the space.

9 a.m.–noon Hear from Rev. Veronica Johnson as she reflects on her experience working with congregations across the Midwest as they wrestle with sustainability and climate change. Susan Bauer-Wu (virtual) shares the wisdom and guidance she has collected in her new book *A Future We Can Love*. She and dozens of visionary scientists, activists and spiritual leaders offer us a new lens through which to consider the current crisis and meaningful rituals and practices for connecting to Earth and renewing hope.

Noon Enjoy a delicious, fresh lunch prepared by Prairiewoods' kitchen team, enjoy Sara's music, relax and connect.

1–3:30 p.m. Leah and Veronica return to help us integrate what we have learned and send us off with renewed hope, deeper connections and inspiration for actions we can take.

The cost is \$75 for online participants or \$100 for in-person participants, including lunch. Students can register for just \$25. Register a group of six or more and take \$100 off your total registration. Lodging is available at Prairiewoods, but space is limited. *Learn more and register at www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century.*

Earth & Soul Book Reading & Discussion

Friday, April 26, 1–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Leah Rampy, PhD

Come to Prairiewoods for an optional book reading, discussion and signing with author Leah Rampy, PhD, prior to her presentations at Spirituality in the 21st Century. Leah's book, *Earth &*

Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos, was just released in February. In the midst of accelerating climate devastation and an uncertain future, Leah's new book calls us to renew a deep and personal relationship with Earth.

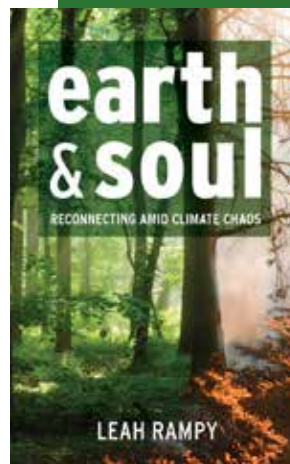
Leah faces directly into the devastation of climate chaos and biodiversity

loss while leading her readers on a soul journey into grief and loss to also claim the beauty, joy and possibilities available when we reconnect with Earth. She presents compelling personal experiences and engagingly lyrical stories of whales, cedars and sparrows so that we can see the necessity and urgency of learning from the wisdom of our kin in the natural world.

Leah writes at the intersection of spirituality, ecology and story, illuminating a path to reweaving nature and soul. Under her deft guidance, the beauty and genius of this sacred world unfolds before us. Even now—when the world as we knew it is ending and a new story lies beyond what we can envision—we may live fully alive and lay stepping stones toward a diverse and vibrant world of oneness and mutual flourishing.

Come listen to Leah read from *Earth & Soul* and participate in a discussion about the book. Feel free to bring your own copy for signing, and copies also will be available for purchase.

Fee: Free-will offering



“Earth and soul cry out for a conversation far deeper and more profound than that of saving our lifestyle. It is time to reweave connections for the sake of mutual thriving here and now as we teeter on the edge of even greater loss.”

—Leah Rampy, *Earth and Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos*

“Somewhere between the eighty-five-year-old Tibetan Buddhist leader [the Dalai Lama] and the eighteen-year-old activist [Greta Thunberg], between the sage legacy and the whole life ahead, is where the rest of us must come in. And we must.”

—Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*, p. 3

Susan Bauer-Wu, PhD, RN, FAAN, (virtual) is the president of the Mind & Life Institute, which serves as the primary convener, catalyst and community builder for the contemplative sciences. Her new book, *A Future We Can Love: How We Can Reverse the Climate Crisis with the Power of Our Hearts and Minds*, shares the words of the Dalai Lama and Greta Thunberg in dialogue with climate scientists, activists and spiritual leaders as they start a world-changing conversation. Learn more at www.mindandlife.org/person/susan-bauer-wu.

Rev. Veronica M. Johnson serves as Outreach Director for Faith in Place, whose mission is to “empower people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to be leaders in advancing environmental and racial justice, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.” She has a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering and a master of divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. She currently serves as co-pastor of Hyde Park Union Church. She has served previously in the Baptist, AME and UCC churches, and is the former president of the council for the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. Learn more at www.faithinplace.org/staff-bios-2.

Leah Rampy, PhD, is a writer, speaker, retreat leader and educator who weaves ecology, spirituality, personal stories and practices to encourage others to deepen their relationship to the natural world. She recently authored the book *Earth & Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos* that was just released in February 2024. She is a frequent speaker on contemplative leadership and spiritual ecology for these edge times. She has previously served as the Executive Director for Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, where she continues as an adjunct staff member. She is the founder and leader of Church of the Wild Two Rivers that meets regularly to deepen spirituality through time in the natural world. Leah offers retreats through Friends of Silence and for the Center for Spirituality in Nature, where she also serves as the senior spiritual program leader. Learn more at www.leahmoranrampy.com.

Sara Thomsen will weave her soulful, hope-filled music throughout the two-day event. “Thomsen’s soulful voice, poetic lyrics and unforgettable melodies cut through to the heart and the soul of human experience,” proclaims the *Minnesota Women’s Press*. With a voice rich as the best Midwest soil, Sara’s songs 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 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. Increasing wonder and awareness, deepening spiritual connection, and widening social engagement through song is at the heart of her work. Sara’s ability to get people singing magically transforms gatherings into communities empowered with possibility. Learn more at www.sarathomsen.com.



For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

Retreats

Turning back Toward the Light Retreat (in person)

Friday, March 8, 6 p.m.–Sunday, March 10, 11 a.m. (choose your time)

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

As we prepare ourselves to wrap up a long, cold winter, in anticipation of the spring equinox, we will use Katherine May's new book *Enchantment: Awakening Wonder in an Anxious Age* as our inspiration. "May ... explore(s) the restorative properties of the natural world—from a pebble in the hand to the ... pleasure of the ground beneath her bare feet to the magic of a moon shadow. Enchantment is an invitation to each of us to experience life in all its sensual complexity and to find the beauty waiting for us there." We will take time for quiet and meditation alongside spirited conversation and celebration of the coming season. As the weather allows, we will explore Prairiewoods for signs of spring! Rev. Jean Sullivan serves as Prairiewoods' Coordinator for Outreach, Engagement and Hospitality, welcoming groups that come to Prairiewoods. She has a bachelor's degree in medical anthropology, a master of divinity and nearly three decades in ordained congregational ministry with the United Church of Christ.

Saturday Only Fee: \$75 for Saturday 9 a.m.–4 p.m., includes lunch

Friday & Saturday Fee: \$125 for Friday 6 p.m.–Saturday 4 p.m., includes Friday lodging and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Weekend Fee: \$175 for Friday 6 p.m.–Sunday 11 a.m., includes two nights' lodging, Saturday meals and Sunday breakfast



Inner & Outer Communities of Care: Circle Singing Retreat (in person)

Friday, April 5, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, April 6, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Mary Cohen & Marie Garry

Research indicates singing is a powerful medicine for managing stress, activating the vagus nerve to help us feel safe and connected. Songs enliven! As we sing songs of hope and love, we create space for strengthening our inner wisdom and resilience. Through guided conversations and practice, participants affirm one another and deepen a community of care. As we sing together, we harmonize, revitalize, share struggle, and celebrate hope and healing. The songs we will sing embody our interconnectedness with Earth and all creation. All voices are welcome, including people who do not "identify" as singers yet wish to sing, people who sing in the car and shower, and experienced singers. This retreat also will offer opportunities to create through improvisation and songwriting. We will offer yoga nidra, a resting practice, and healing practices for self-regulation. Professor of Music Education at the University of Iowa Mary L. Cohen researches music-making and wellbeing, songwriting and collaborative communities. A 2009 foundress of the Oakdale Prison Community Choir, she collaborated with the Soweto Gospel Choir, Maggie Wheeler and Sara Thomsen to design and host "Learning Exchange," a model for singing, movement and discussion based on a select theme. J. Marie Garry, MA, is a professional counselor, workshop facilitator and song artist. Over the years, she has performed and recorded with the musical groups Aurora and A Delicate Balance. Her current musical passion is singing, writing and sharing songs sourced from the community singing movement. Together Mary and Marie cohost a regional singing circle that is also a part of the Ubuntu Choir Network.

Fee: \$200 includes retreat sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$140 includes sessions and Saturday lunch



Programs

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays; March 4, March 18, April 1 & April 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 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. Registration is required.

Fee: \$12

Journey toward A Future We Can Love (hybrid)

Tuesdays; March 5, 12, 19 & 26; 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Jean Sullivan; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Aaron Brewer

Susan Bauer-Wu is One of Prairiewoods' Spirituality in the 21st Century Speakers

Join us for a deep read, conversation and education about climate crises through Susan Bauer-Wu's *A Future We Can Love: How We Can Reverse the Climate Crisis with the Power of our Hearts and Minds*. It is inspired by a conversation between the Dalai Lama and Greta Thunberg. Blending science and spirituality, Bauer-Wu offers a roadmap to help us educate people to more clearly speak and act on behalf of the Earth community. Each week we will dive deep into understanding the urgency to act and transform our fear and grief into action. Join us via Zoom or in person for any one or more sessions.

Fee: \$25 per session or \$75 for four-session series

Intention: The Inner Work of Age (in person)

Tuesdays; March 5, March 19, April 2, April 16, April 30 & May 14; 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

Facilitators: Joann Gehling, FSPA, & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Inner reflection and setting intentions can shift and reframe how we actually age! Crossing the threshold from role to soul is not for the faint of heart! Such a shift often impacts our sense of identity, body image, approach to learning new things, disposition for change, images of the divine ... This series will build community and offer a variety of spiritual practices that may assist in fully claiming and embodying your intention to choose to age consciously. Amid this time of momentous cultural transformation, shifting from role to soul is critical to personal and global wellbeing. Join this community of "elders" to lift intention and surface passion, wisdom and service for life.

Fee: \$35 per session, includes lunch, or \$180 for six-session series if paid prior to March 5

Day of Self Renewal (in person)
Thursdays, March 7 & April 4, &
Mondays, March 11 & April 8,
8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, Singing Bowl Prayer or Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Services may include massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, qigong, yoga or chair yoga. Visit www.Prairiewoods.org for details.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three service choices are required eight days in advance.

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

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

Thursdays, March 7–April 25,
12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Based on age-old Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), this gentle and accessible class involves meditative, healing energy and compassion-based standing movement,

breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice. We begin by opening, rebalancing and cultivating *Qi* (universal life force energy-Spirit) throughout the body's energy pathways, centers and organs to assist with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Class ends with seated meditation, which includes sending healing compassionate intention to others and the planet.

Fee: \$12 per session

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays, March 7 & April 4,
1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing, penetrating power of healing sound and vibration via singing

bowls. Then drop into deepest levels of relaxation and peace through authentic, age-old Yogic Sleep (yoga nidra)—a reclined, meditative experience used by stress reduction clinics, integrative health care and mystics who savor resting in blissful Oneness with The Sacred. We will close with prayerful sound healing, including a lower-octave bowl played on or near (your choice) the shrine of your heart.

Fee: \$10

On Common Ground Book Tour (in person)

Thursday, March 7, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Brian Hazlett & Ryan Allen

Meet with editors Brian Hazlett and Ryan Allen to discuss their book *On Common Ground: Learning and Living in the Loess Hills*. This anthology of essays, poems, photographs and artwork was inspired by a gathering of writers, naturalists and artists near Broken Kettle Grasslands in 2021. Highlights from that fall weekend included a prairie burn and encountering the Nature Conservancy's bison herd. We will watch a 30-minute documentary about the experience and then have time for questions with the editors.

Fee: Free-will offering

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)
Mondays, March 11 & April 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. Registration is required by noon.

Fee: \$10

On the Cusp of Change: Grieving & Practicing Equanimity (Zoom)
Tuesdays, March 12 & April 9,
7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

In the 21st century, change comes faster and closer together. How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and to better understand our choices in living with change, whether it's personal or global? This yearlong series of twelve stand-alone online programs and three in-person retreats takes a deeper dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of

the present day. On the second Tuesday of each month, Karen will lead an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus of how to make change more trustworthy. On March 12, we'll talk about grieving, and on April 9, we'll talk about practicing equanimity. Three optional in-person retreats at the Christine Center and Prairiewoods in the spring, summer (a focused retreat for writers) and fall are open to all, whether you've participated online or not.

Fee: \$15 per session

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

Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them): Wednesdays, March 13 & April 10, 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: Wednesdays, March 20 & April 17, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW

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. These monthly grief groups are open to anyone grieving loss through death. In March, we'll work with macrame feathers, which can symbolize the transience of the grief journey. Feelings come and go in unpredictable waves as we maneuver our new normal. In April, we'll make colorful window clings. Just as your loved one brought color and light to your life, colors can also represent the different emotions you are experiencing during your grief journey. Registration is required one week in advance. This group is now offered only in person.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the family group)

Braiding Sweetgrass Book Group Discussion (Zoom)

Thursday, March 14, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: staff from Prairiewoods, the Franciscan Spirituality Center & Marywood Spirituality Center

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist and as a woman, author Robin Wall Kimmerer shows how other living beings offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the



Thelen-Teilhard Christophany Group (hybrid)

Wednesday, April 3, 5:15–6:45 p.m.
Facilitator: Steve Sovern

This Christophany Group begins its monthly gathering at Prairiewoods on the first Wednesday of each month. Based upon the belief that love is the fundamental energy of evolution, we gather in community, recognizing that we have the opportunity to co-create the universe and participate in the energy of evolution. These groups are formed as spaces of deep relationality with a vision to heal our world and transform lives through the real-world experience of communal reflection, shared friendship and collective spiritual practice based on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin and the authors who interpret and advance his vision. Group discussions will incorporate a Lectio Divina-like process to assure the inclusion of perspectives of all participants.

Fee: Free-will offering

acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. Please join staff from the Franciscan Spirituality Center, Marywood Spirituality Center and Prairiewoods for an evening of discussion and reflection over Zoom. All are welcome! Please register by March 7.

Fee: \$5 (please purchase the book separately)

Civilized Wildlings (in person) Community Art Installation:

Wednesday, March 20–Sunday, April 21
Reception & Artist Talk: Sunday, April 21, 2–5 p.m.

Facilitator: Jill Foote-Hutton

Offered in partnership with Iowa Ceramics Center & Glass Studio

Prairiewoods and the Iowa Ceramics Center & Glass Studio, with grant funding from the Iowa Arts Council, are entering into the final phase of the Civilized Wildlings series with multi-media artist Jill Foote-Hutton. Part three of this series will begin March 20 with the display of community-made mosaics created at the Ceramics Center. This exhibition will feature 20–35 mosaic projects that community members created at a November workshop. (Call 319-395-6700 for viewing hours.) On Sunday, April 21, Prairiewoods will host a reception with Jill Foote-Hutton with an Artist Talk beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Fee: Free-will offering

Drum Circle (in person) Saturday, March 23, & Sunday, April 28, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Join Drum Iowa and Prairiewoods for a wonderful outdoor drum circle (weather permitting). Don't forget your drums! (We also will have instruments available for you to borrow.) You don't need to be a magnificent drummer or musician to enjoy this fun afternoon, and you are by no means obligated to participate. Spectators are welcome, and we'll have you drumming in no time! Registration is not necessary.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 (but this is a free event for all to enjoy)

The Universal Christ: Finding Christ in Every THING (in person)

Wednesdays, April 3–May 8,
6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Kim Novak

Richard Rohr's book *The Universal Christ* provides a new/old way to understand and embody the love of Christ in God, Self and Other. This series provides opportunities for self-transformation and increasing our awareness of Christ in all things. As a Franciscan, Rohr explores our Original Goodness, and how owning this goodness leads us to a place of compassion for all. We will look beyond the "rules" of our church, culture and current understanding in order to see that "Everything visible, without exception, is the outpouring of God." When we come to truly see Christ in our neighbor, animals, the environment—how we connect and care for them is transformed. Everything is sacred, everything is spiritual.

Fee: \$100 for six-week series

Mandala Drawing Workshop (in person)

Saturday, April 13, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Come create with the Creator! We will draw a beautiful mandala, or sacred circular work of art, using artist's pens and drawing paper. We will learn about mandalas, including their spiritual significance

throughout history. Then we'll spend our time drawing in a contemplative setting. We'll each leave with a unique mandala that represents our spirit!

Fee: \$15 includes all supplies



Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; March 4–April 29; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga) & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga.

Fee: \$120 for eleven-punch card, \$72 for six-punch card or \$15 for single class

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom) Thursdays, March 7–April 25, 4–5 p.m.

Convener: Ellen Bruckner

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics.

Fee: Free-will offering

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom) first & third Thursdays; March 7, March 21, April 4 & April 18; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz

Practice contemplative living to respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections.

Fee: Free-will offering

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, March 12 & April 9, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, March 27 & April 24, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity.

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; March 12, March 26, April 9 & April 23; 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith

Practice a contemplative form of prayer to help deepen your relationship with God.

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second & fourth Thursdays; March 14, March 28, April 11 & April 25; 4–5:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linzy Martin

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes.

Fee: Free-will offering

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony Saturdays, March 23 & April 20, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2, ceremony starts at 4)

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

Participate in an ancient ceremony focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Iowa BIG Student Projects

Students from Iowa BIG and Prairiewoods have been partnering for the last several years on some amazing projects. Iowa BIG is a public-school program in the metro area that promotes learning through working on project teams to develop initiatives the students care about. Students get to experience learning in real-life, hands-on situations. This year we're thrilled to be hosting three different Iowa BIG teams! We're also grateful to their teachers, Mark Matson and Nate Pruett, for overseeing the projects. Here are their projects:

Flying Drone Team: This group of young women have been doing drone filming at Prairiewoods this fall and winter. Their goal is to create drone videos that Prairiewoods can use on our website and social media to show the land and buildings from a different vantage point. They've learned how to use cameras effectively, they've learned how to utilize editing software to convert the raw footage into something fun to watch, and they've even captured a couple of sunrise videos that can be sped up to show some of the beauty of Prairiewoods "waking up" for the day.

Natural Playscape Teams: These two groups of young men and women have been the brains and brawn behind designing and fabricating much of what people will see in the Natural Playscape area at Prairiewoods. They'll be adding to what last year's Iowa BIG students built, including a puzzle table, swing, teeter totter, music wall, outdoor kitchen and even an outdoor theater for children to play with! They're all very excited to have these outdoor Natural Playscape pieces in place so that young visitors to Prairiewoods can have a memorable experience. They've learned how to research, design and fabricate each of the items they built. This includes using power tools, collaborating with their teammates and recognizing that their time spent will benefit our community for years to come.

Community Gardens Raised Garden Beds Team: This team will be building twelve raised garden beds in the Green Community Gardens and are about a third of the way through their project. During the winter months, they're making numbered signs for each garden plot and a larger sign for the garden entrance. The students are learning basic construction skills and power-tool operation and troubleshooting. They're also enjoying getting their hands dirty in the soil and recognizing the importance for kids to play in nature.



Kaleb Wesselink

Last fall, Kaleb Wesselink, a senior at Linn-Mar High School, approached us about doing his Eagle Scout project at Prairiewoods. Eagle Scout is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Boy Scouts and requires completion of a community service project, among other things. The projects he chose included replacing a foot bridge on the trails and adding a two-person swing near the Hermitages. The old foot bridge was not wide enough for maintenance vehicles to drive over, and the new bridge allows our vehicles to easily get to all of the locations on our trail system. The construction of the new swing provides a place for guests to sit and enjoy nature.

When Kaleb was asked what he would tell others who have never visited Prairiewoods, he said, "Prairiewoods offers visitors a place to disconnect from the stress and constant movement of life. This has rung especially true in my life as a place to decompress and just sit in nature and appreciate the stillness. There are so many trails and benches to walk and sit on as well as different landscapes from the prairie, to the stream, and woods. I would recommend visiting it sometime."

We are so grateful to Kaleb, his family and his team of volunteers who helped accomplish these two impactful projects!



Pictured from left to right, top to bottom: Flying Drone Team (Avery, Anna, Olivia, Ava and Brianna), Natural Playscape Team 1 (Rex, Olivia and Josie), Natural Playscape Team 2 (Anna, Kiyaree and Becca) and Community Gardens Raised Garden Beds Team (Lauren and Bryan, missing Riley and Lillianna)

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list of donors and volunteers, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate.



120 E Boyson Rd
Hiawatha IA 52233

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

- Please send your mailings electronically to _____.
- Please take us off your mailing list.
- Please note the address change.
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Are you on social media? Find "Prairiewoods FSC" on:



Since 2001, our *Spirituality in the 21st Century* event has brought you speakers like Marcus Borg, Walter Brueggemann, Ilia Delio and Peter Block. This year, we've got three national speakers you won't want to miss!



Spirituality in the 21st Century: Hope in Action
Friday, April 26, &
Saturday, April 27

See pages 6–7 for details.



May/June 2024

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Grounded, Awakening, Becoming ...

As Prairiewoods enters its twenty-eighth spring and summer, we are conscious of three horizons present simultaneously. The first horizon is our past—the very ground of our being. The second horizon is our present—a time of great awakening and preparing for the next evolution. And the third horizon is our becoming—the future to which Prairiewoods is called. As we continue this beautiful journey, it makes sense that we should pause, honor what grounds us, attend to what is awakening in and around us, and prepare for the journey ahead.

Grounded

“Apprehend God in all things, for **God is in all things**. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God. If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature—even a caterpillar—I would never have to prepare a sermon. So full of God is every creature.”

—Meister Eckhart

In the spring it is easy to think about the ground from which all things grow. We can smell the damp Earth and see the new green emerging from the Earth. We are also quite aware of the echoes of the seasons before and the richness they add to the soil.

Prairiewoods is grounded in profound truth and the wisdom of many generations. Influenced by the intersections of theology, science and ecology, Prairiewoods has emphasized not just spirituality but eco-spirituality.

The eco-theology of Thomas Berry and others within the Franciscan tradition have shaped us.

(continued on page 3)

spring blossoms by Joni Reed Cooley

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"The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw and knew I saw all things in God and God in all things."

—Mechtild of Magdeburg

Matthew Fox reflects on Mechtild's writing by saying, "Do you feel yourself moving from sleep and forgetfulness to an awakening?" This is a timely and provocative question for me in so many ways. We as humans often live in a state of forgetfulness. And this forgetfulness is often the source

of pain and struggle.

Three experiences have inspired me in the last couple of months. The first, reading Dr. Lisa Miller's book *The Awakened Brain*. Her research over decades now confirms what we have forgotten so often. Humans are spiritual beings. When we care for and cultivate our spiritual life, it offers us a pathway to resilience. And this spirituality, though not its expression, is core to all humans.

The second, participating in three different workshops and listening sessions focused on racial justice and healing. I discovered that I have been unconscious of important history that has shaped this nation and the community I live in. And while I cannot rewrite the past, I can choose a path forward that is restorative.

The third and most recent is the experience of spring. It is early this year, and that causes me concern for a whole host of reasons. And yet, the appearance of jaunty daffodils makes me smile. I am encouraged by the risks being taken by the early budding trees. Like the iris sending up their flags, I will believe in another summer and the possibility of new growth—for the land, for us as humans ...

I also know that this potential can only be realized by awakening to our relationships—and interdependence with each other and all Creation. It is the source of hope and abundance.

What are you awakening to this season?
Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright



early spring daffodils by Karla Ruth



Prairiewoods is an 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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www.Prairiewoods.org
Ecospirit@Prairiewoods.org



(continued from page 1)

These principles are centered in our work: care for the Earth community, love for all people, a commitment to peace and reconciliation, justice and right relationships. These principles require Prairiewoods to be an agent of transformation.

Awakening

“Divinity permeates all things, and all things have the imprint of divinity, yet the sum of all things does not fully encompass the mystery of the divine.”

—AllCreation.org

The present time is one of awakening attention across traditions and disciplines. Where is change happening, and how will Prairiewoods respond? Diarmuid O’Murchu, in his new book *Ecological Spirituality*, reflects on the “complex and evolutionary nature of eco-spirituality” and its role in shaping consciousness that will positively impact the Earth and all who dwell upon it. The Prairiewoods team has been scanning the environment and paying attention to where there is suffering and disharmony. A powerful theme recently has cut across all our work and learning—the need for regeneration and restoration. There is a need for the restoration of the Earth, the repair of relationships and, by extension, the restoration of humans impacted by injustice and trauma.

Becoming

“We are now entering an enlarged horizon of our understanding of God and of how that same God, as energizing and creative Spirit, invites us into a deeper and wider engagement with the whole of creation.”

—Diarmuid O’Murchu, p. 32

How does this emerging future call to us? What will it require of Prairiewoods?

The authors of AllCreation.org describe two aims for Creation Spirituality that seem particularly suited to the work of Prairiewoods. First, “integrate the wisdom of indigenous, Eastern, and Western spirituality with the revelations of modern science to awaken mysticism, revitalize our culture, and promote social and ecological justice.” And second, “Inspire sacred work (shaped by) spiritual inquiry, creativity, and prophetic action” (www.allcreation.org/home/cs-intro?rq=creation%20spirituality). We need to expand our understanding and, at the same

time, make space for others to do the same. We offer the practices and experiences that cultivate greater capacity in all of us for “the benefit of Earth and all its creatures.”

We combine that with the guiding principles named by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme: differentiation (the great diversity of life), interiority (the uniqueness of each being) and communion (the essential nature of life in relationship versus isolation). We seek blessings and abundance in the resulting diversity of experience and tradition.

But more is required. We have set an intention this year to create a refreshed Evolutionary Plan to help us respond to the call of this emerging future.

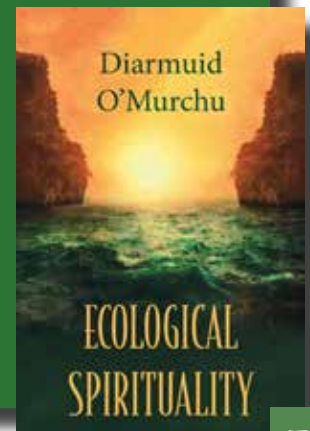
First, we will hold space for the endless creative potential available in our connection to this ecological spirituality. Prairiewoods will create safe spaces for discovery, for diverse perspectives and for deep learning. The words that resonate right now are *refuge*, *restoration* and *resilience*. Prairiewoods is called to be a dynamic partner in restoring and healing people, the environment and the community. To do that, Prairiewoods must be resilient and, more importantly, Prairiewoods must assist in cultivating and nourishing resilience in others. Spiritual resilience will be essential for the challenging days ahead. The world needs an army of change agents equipped with compassion, staying power and a vision of the common good.

As we cultivate this ecological spirituality in ourselves and in community, we cultivate our capacity for compassion, connection, creativity and positive vision. This is what a thriving future looks like. Please join us on this journey of restoration and regeneration.

Ecological Spirituality Book Study (Zoom) Wednesdays, May 1–June 26, 7:30–8:30 a.m. or 7–8 p.m.

Join us for a new book study focused on Diarmuid O’Murchu’s book *Ecological Spirituality*. This online book study via Zoom will be offered at two times to fit into various schedules. Join Leslie Wright from 7:30–8:30 a.m. or Rev. Jean Sullivan from 7–8 p.m. for nine Wednesday sessions, May 1–June 26. Together we will delve deeply into this book that will help us examine the human-Earth relationship in light of contemporary cosmological and ecological science.

Fee: \$25 for nine-week series, plus cost of book (available in the Prairiewoods Gift Shop)



As we lean into spring, Prairiewoods looks forward to new growth and the hope it brings. We're excited to host our annual Spirituality in the 21st Century conference on April 26–27, where we will discuss cultivating hope and taking action. So we invited a few of Prairiewoods' partners in mission to share:

What hope do you sense is awakening and where do you see that happening?

Carol Sudmeier, Engaged Global Citizen

The Iowa women's basketball team brings me JOY and HOPE!

The sport brings large groups of people TOGETHER for a COMMON CAUSE. Even homebound TV fans are one with those present in the arenas. It is about winning, but also CARING and CHEERING for the athletes, DISCERNING differences among cultures, INFLUENCING adults' and children's behaviors, and LEARNING about the power of TEAMWORK. The children have been watching. Worth noting are (1) Coach Bluder's LEADERSHIP and recognition of the LOVE among the team members and the SUPPORT of the fan base; and (2) Caitlin Clark's ATTENTION to the children who perhaps dream of emulating her achievements. Team members participate and enhance nonprofit activities by their presence.

Sports enables relationships. With a dying friend, I could share something we loved rather than the maladies of illness. We texted during games, talked about games at other times, agreed and disagreed (between us only) about coaching decisions. The athletes modeled RESILIENCE! How many times have they fallen, been knocked down, missed a shot or made a bad pass? They get up, if they can, and just keep trying! It has also helped bridge the distance between young and old, giving us a topic we both are excited about.



James Klein, President of Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust

As a lifelong banker, I definitely see Hope awakening in our local community. I see people being more aware of the divide between "the haves and the have-nots," and there is great concern around this inequity. Recently CRBT hosted a community forum with many area nonprofits around the challenge of housing options for all people in our community. While many great programs are rolled out—many policies that are rolled out from state or national governments have unintended consequences. I have seen and witnessed local people getting more involved and wanting to be part of a solution for our community.



Another huge change I have seen and heard from area residents is the concept of win-win versus win-lose. In the national arena—it is perceived that if one side wins ... the other needs to lose. Fortunately, more and more people are finding that it does not need to be that way. In many situations there can be a win-win outcome if people are willing to come together and talk (and listen) openly.

I see that in the financial world each day as people don't just accept the first answer they receive. They push to see if there are other ways to examine a situation for a better outcome.

Overall ... I see and hear more people with hope that if we all work together, great things can happen.



Rev. Jonathan Heifner, Lead Pastor at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Cedar Rapids

Faith communities are awakening to our need for awakening. Through ongoing seismic shifts in cultural and religious landscapes, the terrain is changing dramatically. No longer standing on the firm and familiar ground of the past, we can no longer rely on sleepy old patterns and systems. This is indeed a scary thing, but fear is also being met with a sense of new possibilities.

The faith community I serve is exploring the terrain by paying attention to the things that bring energy to the individual body as well as the collective Body. By listening intently and with our whole being, discernment practices are guiding us into the patterns where the Wind is moving.

What is on the horizon is yet to be seen, but as we ask what the Spirit is doing, we are awakening to new possibilities.”

Liz Matthis, Economic Development Coordinator for Hiawatha Economic Development Corp.

Hiwatha is a growing vibrant community—not only can you “feel” it, but you can see the growth driving around the community.

Our newly-elected Mayor of Hiawatha, Steve Dodson, says our town has more room to grow, and it's estimated our population will reach 9,154 by 2024 and 10,033 by 2029. So that means we need to be prepared to serve new residents who chose Hiawatha as a place to live.

We have awakened not only because of future growth, but we want to serve our residents in the best way possible. That responsibility comes in the form of building a strong infrastructure, providing excellent public safety (police and fire) and responsive city government.

Hiawatha is home to almost 400 businesses who employ more than 3,800 people. The Hiawatha BRE (business retention and expansion) interviews I've done indicate that several businesses have growth in their short-term and long-term plans, and most of them are talking about adding jobs and square footage.

Our forte is families. When looking at the metro, including Cedar Rapids and Marion, Hiawatha knows its role as a place where families are welcome, and the city is here to help large and small businesses succeed.



Elizabeth Callahan, Magnet School Coordinator for Cedar River Academy at Taylor Elementary

It's spring, and just as we see the blossoms in our garden, those of us in education are seeing our students blossom. We have worked all fall and winter to cultivate students who have a love of reading, find joy in math, and are curious about the world around them. In spring, we witness the fruits of our labor: students who struggled at the start of the year are grasping concepts they thought out of reach, students who were shy and kept to themselves have developed a network of friends, and everyone is begging for just a little more time to play outside.

For educators, spring is the time to enjoy the last few weeks we have with the class we grew into a family and marvel at how fast the school year went and how much our students have grown. Spring is when teachers everywhere are reflecting on a job well done, and looking forward to a season of rest before we begin again.



How are you awakening? Feel free to share your story at www.facebook.com/PrairiewoodsFSC. We'd also love to have you join us **April 26–27** at **Spirituality in the 21st Century**, where we'll be awakening hope and spurring action for the climate crisis. Learn more at www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century.

Garden Party: Growing Our Roots



PRAIRIEWOODS garden party GROWING OUR ROOTS

Saturday, June 8, 5–8 p.m., at Prairiewoods

Join us at our annual *Garden Party fundraiser* on Saturday, June 8, for a night of great music, food and nature! Proceeds from this event will go toward supporting and expanding our beautiful outdoor spaces as well as our gardens that produce thousands of pounds of fresh, organic produce each year. Once harvested, the produce is donated to local food pantries that serve those in our community facing food insecurity.

We have lots of fun things planned for our event, including our popular Dough for Dough raffle. Buy a wonderful fresh-baked loaf of bread for \$30 and have your name entered for chance to win a \$300 cash prize! Buy early because the loaves sell out fast. The event will include:

- A huge silent auction
- Live music by the Anji Kat Trio
- A tour of our grounds

Don't Miss Our Silent Auction!

We're finding some fantastic items for our silent auction that you'll want to bid on.

We'll Have Some Great Live Music!

During the evening you'll be serenaded with music by the smooth and classy jazz standards of the Anji Kat Trio.

Take A Tour of Our Beautiful Grounds

We encourage you to take a tour of our grounds to see everything that Prairiewoods has to offer. From 5–6 p.m., you can meander our trails where you'll find our labyrinth, Grandmother Oak, our new Natural Playscape and more. If walking isn't your thing, we'll also have rides on our ATV. If you get out to all of our stops, we'll put your name in for a fantastic drawing!

To register for our Garden Party or to donate, go to www.Prairiewoods.org/Garden-Party. The cost is \$60 per ticket and includes wine, beer or non-alcoholic beverages, as well as a delicious hors d'oeuvres buffet beginning at 6 p.m. We hope you'll join us!



For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

Replenish: A Retreat for Caregivers (in person)
Friday, May 17, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, May 18, 2 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Many of us are caregivers, whether for free or for a wage. We care for people nearby or those who are far away. Regardless of who you're looking after, whether it's children or elderly adults or if you work in healthcare, this retreat is for you. It is hard work, which makes caring for yourself while you are caring for others that much more important. Come to restore, recharge and replenish. Enjoy a contemplative walk through the woods or across the prairie. Bring whatever is on your heart and walk the labyrinth. Just sit under Grandmother Oak and commune with nature. Explore stress reduction and spiritual practices to find the calm within. Leave renewed and ready to savor the long summer days ahead!

Fee: \$175 includes presentations, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes presentations and Saturday lunch



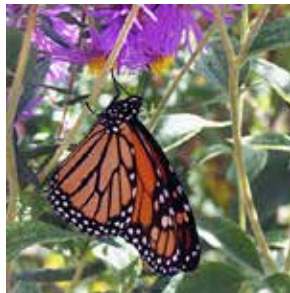
The Power of Silence: June Silent Directed Retreat (in person)

Sunday, June 9, 4 p.m.–Saturday, June 15, 1 p.m.

This retreat also offered July 7–13 & Oct. 6–12!

Facilitators: Rose Blank; Cindy Dunn; Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? Silent Directed Retreats offer opportunities to enter into deep silence to sense what it feels like to awaken a quiet and palpable connection with the Source of All Being. Each day you will receive ongoing direction as you and a professionally-trained spiritual director intentionally listen to the movement of the Source of All Being in your heart. Silence assists you to get in touch with feelings, thoughts and actions as you reflect, meditate, pray and rest. Silence deepens the capacity to sense the movement of the Source of All Being within the whole of your life. Sharing with a professional may bring you clarity, deepen your commitment and accountability to the direction of your life. We try to hold any outside stimulation to a minimum so that everything—the silence, solitude, reflective activities, meals, etc.—supports your journey within. A daily centering practice is offered. Optional reflective activities such as artwork, yoga and singing bowl meditation are available throughout the week. Even meals are eaten reflectively in silence. Each day supports your individual needs. Stroll woods and prairie. Sense sunset quietly turn to dusk. Journal or read, if you choose. Nap. Engage in yoga, art expression, meditation. Notice how food nourishes your capacity for silence. Explore holding the silence with creation all



around you: humans, stone, tree, pond, squirrel, deer, turkey, star, moon, dawn, dusk ... Is the silence simply the absence of noise? Or is it also a presence unto itself? See for yourself! Come re-establish and remember the deep connection we share with all of Creation as we listen together to the GREAT SILENCE. Rest in silence and sense its wisdom. Author Carolyn Myss assures: "The soul always knows what to do to heal itself. The challenge is to silence the mind."

Fee: \$525 includes lodging, meals and spiritual direction (*Partial scholarships are available.*)

Earth Blessings: Reweaving Connections to Kith & Kin Retreat (in person)

Friday, June 28, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, June 30, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Leah Rampy, PhD

These are times of great challenge and loss in the living world. Although connections have frayed, our soul longs to reclaim the relationships we know are possible. Join us to explore how we can open more fully to kinship with the beings around us who have waited patiently for our return.

The rhythm of retreat will include small and large group discussion, practices for reconnection, and spacious silence for wandering and reconnecting in the woods and prairie.

Fee: \$250 includes presentations, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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



Save the Date!

Whole-Making with Our Ancestors with Cheryl Conklin, June 22

The Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreats with Cindy Dunn; Eric Evans; Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA; July 7–13 & Oct. 6–12

Finding Peace in Mothering Retreat with Tammy Bayer & Jean Sullivan, July 26–28

Navigating Transitions: A Path to Reset & Renew Retreat with Jill Saunders & Leslie Schwarting, Aug. 2–3

Active Hope for a Troubled World Retreat with Kathleen Rude, Aug. 9–11

Becoming the Elder Tree: Purpose in the Second Half of Life Retreat with Thomas Dean & Chris Johnson, Aug. 16–18

The Book of Nature Retreat with Barbara Mahany, Sept. 6–8

World Labyrinth Day: Three Ways to Celebrate!

Pathways to Peace: Walking the Labyrinth One-Day Retreat (in person)

Saturday, May 4, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Wright

Join us for a daylong immersion in the contemplative practice of walking the labyrinth. Labyrinths are found throughout the world with the oldest dating back thousands of years. In contemporary use, labyrinths provide an opportunity for personal reflection, spiritual practice, or the reduction of stress in many different public and private settings. During this contemplative, daylong retreat, you will have an opportunity to walk a labyrinth, create your own finger labyrinth, enjoy a delicious meal and connect with others interested in deepening their spiritual practice. We will join in the public World Labyrinth Day walk at 1.

Fee: \$95

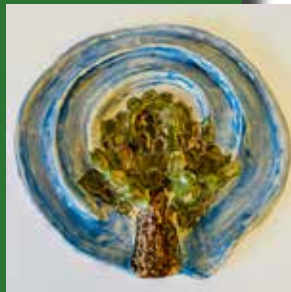
Create Your Own Finger Labyrinth (in person)

Saturday, May 4, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitator: Iowa Ceramics Center & Glass Studio

Create your own personal finger labyrinth. Using slabs of wet clay, you will carve a path for your finger to trace. You will then add color or pattern to your labyrinth. The labyrinth will be fired in the kilns at the Iowa Ceramics Center and be ready for pick up three weeks later. Labyrinths will be approximately ten-inch squares, perfect for your desk or table.

Fee: \$40 (This workshop is included in the daylong retreat.)



Walk as One at 1 (in person)

Saturday, May 4, 1–2 p.m. (gather by 12:45 p.m.)

On Saturday, May 4, thousands of people will participate in the sixteenth annual World Labyrinth Day as a moving meditation for peace and celebration of the labyrinth experience. Many participants will “Walk as One at 1” by walking a labyrinth at 1 p.m. local time to create a rolling wave of peaceful energy passing from one time zone to the next around the globe. Whether you are familiar with labyrinths or new to the idea of non-maze labyrinth paths, all are welcome to learn more and take part. World Labyrinth Day is an international event held on the first Saturday each May, sponsored by The Labyrinth Society in collaboration with partner organizations including the Australian Labyrinth Network, Legacy Labyrinth Project and Veriditas.

Fee: Free (This walk is included in the daylong retreat.)



Sacred Sight: See with New Eyes Photography Workshop (in person)

Friday, May 17, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Erin LaBelle

“How you see anything is how you will see everything.”

—Richard Rohr

You’re invited to join photographer Erin LaBelle for a daylong inner and outer exploration intended to forge deeper connections with self, other, nature and God. Together, we’ll slow down and spend time listening, observing, reflecting and sharing. Erin will facilitate group conversations and offer activities to open the heart and awaken the imagination, guiding participants to an expanded vision of themselves and the surrounding world. You’ll only need a phone camera, a journal, a writing utensil, curiosity and an open mind.

Fee: \$100

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

Information Sessions: Monday, May 20, or Wednesday, June 5, 5:30–6:30 p.m. (via Zoom)

Eight-Week Series: Tuesdays, June 18–Aug. 6, 5:30–8 p.m.

Retreat Day: Saturday, July 27, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

Mindfulness is the power of mind to be deeply aware of what’s happening—without commentary or interference. Research reveals numerous benefits to the nervous system, emotions and general sense of well-being. Over eight weeks the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program will cultivate the skill of mindfulness through formal meditation practices and informal integrative practices. This series consists of a two-and-a-half-hour class each week over eight weeks with one extended six-and-a-half-hour class. If you want to participate, please attend one of the free information sessions.

Fee: \$400 for the eight-week series (Those working in the human service field may register for just \$100!)

Joyful Teaching: Cultivating Hope through Mindfulness & SEL (in person)

Credit 1: Monday, June 24, 1 p.m.–Wednesday, June 26, 12 p.m.

Facilitators: Sarah Montgomery & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Would you like to cultivate more joy in your classroom, teaching and daily life? Would you like to learn about mindfulness and social and emotional learning (SEL) practices that you can use to support your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your students? In this one-hour credit course, learn practical, simple ways you can press pause, recenter and intentionally promote joy that will have ripple effects for your students, your family and the world.

Fee: \$75 to Prairiewoods and \$35 to GWAEA includes text *Practicing Presence*, overnight lodging is available for additional \$50/night

Credit 2: Wednesday, June 26, 1 p.m.–Friday, June 28, 12 p.m.

This course will offer practices of mindfulness, social and emotional learning (SEL), self-compassion, and neuroscience to develop a personal classroom toolkit for use with students. Deepening your own mindfulness and SEL skills also will be explored.

Fee: \$75 to Prairiewoods and \$35 to GWAEA, overnight lodging is available for additional \$50/night

Micro-Retreat for Mothers: Because You’re Worth It! (in person)

Tuesday, May 7, 5:30–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

You’re invited to take the night off from chauffeuring the kids, cooking, cleaning, laundry, juggling appointments and all “other duties as assigned” that parenting brings. Come to Prairiewoods for an early

Micro-Retreat for Mothers. We will make it easy for you to plug in to a few hours of peace. First, enjoy a nourishing dinner cooked by someone else and bask in the serenity of Prairiewoods. Then learn accessible, easy practices and prayers of self-compassion to carry with you. Dinner is served at 5:30, and we'll have a program from 6:30–8. Why sign up? Like the folks at Loreal say, "Because you're worth it!" This would be a great early Mother's Day gift for any mom in your life!
Fee: \$35 includes dinner

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (hybrid)
Wednesdays, May 1 & June 5, 5:15–6:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern
Based upon the belief that love is the fundamental energy of evolution, we gather in community, recognizing that we have the opportunity to co-create the universe and participate in the energy of evolution. These groups are formed as spaces of deep relationality with a vision to heal our world and transform lives through the real-world experience of communal reflection, shared friendship and collective spiritual practice based on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin and the authors who interpret and advance his vision. Group discussions incorporate a Lectio Divina-like process to assure the inclusion of perspectives of all participants.
Fee: Free-will offering

Exploring Spiritual Direction/Companioning Informational Session (hybrid)
Wednesday, May 1, 12–1 p.m.
Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Learn about spiritual direction/companioning in a free information

session. Spiritual direction/spiritual companionship is a time-honored conversation and listening session between two people in which one person consults another spiritually experienced and trained listener about the ways in which the Source of All Being (God, Divine, Love, Universe, Holy, Buddha, Allah ...) may be moving in their life. It crosses all ancient spiritual traditions. Its aim is to empower us to explore a deeper experience of that Source of All Being through the experienced and compassionate company of another human being. The benefits include cultivating the skill of deep listening, articulating experiences of the Divine, exploring various spiritual practices and resources, and engaging in discernment and exploring spiritual questions. Come learn more about this incredible resource!
Fee: Free

Prayer Walk for Peace (in person)
Thursday, May 2, 6:15–7 a.m., 12:15–1 p.m. or 5:15–6 p.m.
Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

The world is aching for peace: peace in our world, our community, our relationships and ourselves. Join us on a Prayer Walk for Peace on the National Day of Prayer. (Choose from a sunrise walk, a midday walk or an after-work walk.) Everyone is welcome, and registration is not necessary.
Fee: Free

Day of Self Renewal (in person)
Thursdays, May 2 & June 6, & Mondays, May 13 & June 10, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

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

features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl meditation, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Services may include massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, qigong, yoga or chair yoga. Visit www.Prairiewoods.org for details.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three service choices are required eight days in advance.
Fee: \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowls, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Groups (in person)
Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them): Wednesdays, May 8 & June 12, 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: Wednesdays, May 15 & June 19, 5:30–7 p.m.
Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW

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. These monthly grief groups are open to anyone grieving loss through death. In May, we'll do a reverse coloring activity, which can be a great way to release stress and anxiety and help us center ourselves in the moment. In June, we'll create dream catchers, which will help us reflect on our current and future dreams. Registration is required one week in advance.
Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the family group)

Book Review

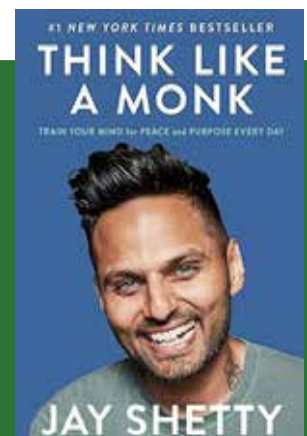
Think Like a Monk: Train Your Mind for Peace and Purpose Every Day by Jay Shetty

The group Men Exploring Faith meets the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 4 p.m. at Prairiewoods or can be joined by Zoom with entry beginning at 3:45 p.m. We currently are reading and enjoying *Think Like a Monk: Train Your Mind for Peace and Purpose Every Day* by Jay Shetty. Jay trained as a Monk in the Hindu tradition but incorporates teachings from the Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions as well. Jay has a warm and engaging writing style that is easy to read and understand. He has the ability to take ancient wisdom

and demonstrate how we can incorporate it in our daily lives. There is something for everyone. If you want tips and exercises on how to overcome negativity, fear, overthinking and a host of other problems that keep you up at night, this book is for you.

Consider joining Men Exploring Faith as we journey through this book and share our thoughts and experiences.

—review by Linzy Martin, group facilitator



You will find many great reads in our Gift Shop. Come in to find new inspiration!

On the Cusp of Change: Taking Part in Stillness & Navigating the Unknown (Zoom)
Tuesdays, May 14 & June 18, 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and better understand our choices in living with change, whether it's personal or global? This yearlong series of twelve stand-alone online programs and three in-person retreats takes a deeper dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of the present day. On the second Tuesday of each month, Karen will lead an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus of how to make change more trustworthy. On May 14, we'll talk about taking part in stillness, and on June 18, we'll talk about navigating the unknown.
Fee: \$15 per session

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Wednesdays, May 15 & June 19, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Desi Kerkman & Derek Doan

Tired of the same old lunch places? Let's renew our bodies and refresh our spirits in a beautiful setting! Join us for YOLO (*Your Other Lunch Option*)—a lunch choice celebrating wholesome, fresh food made from scratch by our chefs. We dine in a community setting with friends we bring with us or new friends we meet over a delicious themed lunch. Check our website for monthly themes. Feel free to arrive at 11:30, and the buffet line opens at noon. Registration is required by the previous Friday.
Fee: \$15

Drum Circle (in person)
Sunday, May 19, 2–4 p.m., & Saturday, June 15, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Join Drum Iowa and Prairiewoods for a wonderful outdoor drum circle (weather permitting). Don't forget your drums! (We also will have instruments available for you to borrow.) You don't need to be a magnificent drummer or musician to enjoy this fun time. Spectators are welcome, and we'll have you drumming in no time! Registration is not necessary.
Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 (but this is a free event for all to enjoy)

Rock Mandala Painting for the Whole Family (in person)

Saturday, June 1, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Spend a few hours creating art with your favorite people! 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. 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.)

Fee: \$15 per person includes all supplies



Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; May 2–June 27 (except May 27); 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga) & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga.

Fee: \$120 for eleven-punch card, \$72 for six-punch card or \$15 for single class

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

Thursdays, May 2–June 27, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Participate in a gentle class that involves meditative, healing energy and compassion-based standing movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice.

Fee: \$12 per session

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

first Thursdays, May 2 & June 6, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing, penetrating power of healing sound and vibration via singing bowls.

Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, May 2–June 27, 4–5 p.m.

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics.

Fee: Free-will offering

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom) first & third Thursdays; May 2, May 16, June 6 & June 20; 7–8:30 p.m.

Practice contemplative living to respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections.

Fee: Free-will offering

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony (in person)

Saturdays, May 4 & June 22, 5:30–8:30 p.m. (setup begins at 4, ceremony at 5:30)

Participate in an ancient ceremony focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

first & third Mondays; May 6, May 20, June 3 & June 17; 6:30–7:30 p.m.

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

Fee: \$12

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid) second & fourth Thursdays; May 9, May 23, June 13 & June 27; 4–5:30 p.m.

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes.

Fee: Free-will offering

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person) second Mondays, May 13 & June 10, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

Let the resonant sounds of singing bowls relax the body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine.

Fee: \$10

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitches (in person)

second Tuesdays, May 14 & June 11, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, May 22 & June 26, 6–8 p.m.

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity. All are welcome!
Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; May 14, May 28, June 11 & June 25; 5:30–7 p.m.

Practice a contemplative form of prayer to help deepen your relationship with God.

Fee: Free-will offering

Meet our Holistic Health Practitioners!

Prairiewoods is so fortunate to have some amazing holistic health practitioners. Whether you're receiving massage therapy, reflexology, healing touch or other services, our practitioners will help you on your journey of self-healing and wellness. To contact them and schedule an appointment, call Prairiewoods at 319-395-6700.

Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, is one of Prairiewoods' foundresses and continues to provide massage therapy, healing touch, reflexology, spiritual direction and Tai Chi Chih'. When speaking about her practice and why she continues, Sister Nancy says, "How about a profession that you look forward to each day, where you meet some of the finest folks alive, where you often finish your day more energized than you began, and where you know what you're contributing to the total health and wellbeing of the client."

Sister Nancy says she "carries a sense of gratitude to all of my teachers who have contributed to my education." She has a certificate from Carlson College of Massage Therapy and many other degrees and certifications. She's also grateful for "the total staff and adjunct staff at Prairiewoods who help make my contributions possible and who are my teachers every day."



Sister Nancy Hoffman and Grace Hoffman, her holistic coach and mentor

Karen Sindelar provides massage therapy, healing touch spiritual ministry, reflexology and dream guidance to retreatants at Prairiewoods. Besides her holistic health services, she also facilitates a Dream Workshop series each September and an ongoing Dream Group throughout the rest of the year.

Karen says that "as an intuitive healer from a very early age, my curiosity and thirst for knowledge led me to find mentors and teachers throughout the world to further my studies. My calling is to help people deal with physical, emotional, spiritual and mental issues to relieve pain and quickly find balance."



Karen has earned many certificates and degrees and says, "I work with both your mind and your muscles to help you find health and balance."

Heather, one of her clients says, "As a massage therapist and Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry Provider, her treatments allow for deeper healing on physical, emotional and spiritual levels. Karen is professional and compassionate."



Paulette Canney is celebrating ten years as a holistic practitioner after 20 years in church ministry. She combines her faith, education and years in ministry with the gifts of empathy and intuition to create a one-of-a-kind session for her clients to help them self-heal.

Known for holistic techniques that are designed to enhance self-healing and wellness for all ages and backgrounds, what Paulette hears most from clients is that they leave with a renewed sense of peace. She hopes that her sessions with her clients "awaken the

best in the human experience and celebrate the divine in each soul."

Paulette's practice was established in 2014 after she came to Prairiewoods looking for renewal herself and took her first of many healing touch and aromatherapy classes. Since then, she has received her certifications as an American Board-Certified Reflexologist, Clinically Certified Aromatherapist, and Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry-Advanced Practitioner. Paulette says that she's "grateful to be able to provide services in collaboration with the amazing Prairiewoods staff for over eight years—it is a privilege and absolute joy!"

Looking for a great gift? Give the gift of time! Gift certificates are available in any amount, such as \$95 for a Day of Self Renewal, \$65 for an hour-long holistic service, \$15 for Rock Mandala Painting or \$10 toward a Gift Shop purchase. Call 319-395-6700 to purchase a gift certificate today!

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list of donors and volunteers, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate.



120 E Boyson Rd
Hiawatha IA 52233

Help Us Update Our Records

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

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

Are you on social media? Find "Prairiewoods FSC" on:



Two Ways to Support Prairiewoods:

Join us at our Garden Party, or bring home a little piece of Prairiewoods with Nature Arrangements!



PRAIRIEWOODS
garden party
GROWING OUR ROOTS

Saturday, June 8, 5–8 p.m.
See page 6 for details.



Prairiewoods Nature Arrangements

Each month the Prairiewoods outdoors team will handcraft an arrangement of natural items from the land that represents the beauty of the season, similar to a flower CSA. Whether you're someone who wants to develop a deeper connection with nature or simply 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 72 acres of woods and prairie. Arrangements will be available for pickup on the first Thursday of each month during business hours. The cost is \$120 for 12 monthly bouquets, May 2024–April 2025.



Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Our Deeper Memory: Embodying the New Universe Story

The “New Universe Story” by Thomas Berry transforms and redefines our understanding of the 14-billion-year-old evolving universe and our place within it! It takes us from the formation of the galaxies and the origin of Earth and life to the development of self-reflective consciousness. Berry bridges scientific understanding and spiritual consciousness. Rooted in his awareness of the cosmos and ecology, Berry’s story reinterprets the universe’s evolution from the Great Flaring Forth (Big Bang) to the present. A visionary thinker and cultural historian, Berry spent many years studying world history and religions.

He experienced a personal transformation while flying from an environmental conference in the Seychelle Islands back to North America. Upon viewing the Nile River from 30,000 feet, he realized that he was no longer a theologian, rather he viewed himself as a *geologist*—a human who emerged out of eons of Earth’s geological and biological evolution *who could reflect on the world!* For Berry, this *capacity for reflection* identified humans at an ever deeper and more expansive species level.

Berry’s view of the human’s role regarding reflection was enhanced when a young mathematical cosmologist, Brian Swimme, who spent years studying evolutionary history at the University of Oregon, became a student of Berry’s. Together they launched an intense decade of research. They gave lectures and conferences culminating in a 1982 jointly authored book, *The Universe Story*. It was a new moment in history! In the telling of this story of evolution, humans played a critical role: reflection! Reflection allowed us to reimagine humanity’s role within Earth.

Thomas wrote prolifically about the ecological crisis in *The Dream of Earth*, *The Great Work* and *The Sacred Universe*, among other titles. These texts elaborated on the importance of human reflection. This weaving together of scientific insights with spiritual reflections presents a wonderfully holistic view of the cosmos. Pivotal is the realization that the universe is a single, dynamic entity, continuously unfolding and evolving. This new perspective sharply contrasts previous perspectives that dominated Western thought, views of the world as a collection of separate parts. Influenced by the work of Teilhard de Chardin, Berry emphasized that humans are not isolated but rather central, participating, integral species in the cosmos. Human actions have profound implications for the entire Earth community. Berry revealed that the outdated anthropocentric perspective led to a plethora of problems: environmental degradation, social injustices and a spiritual disconnection from the natural world.

(continued on page 3)

1. 13-14 billion years ago
the Great Flaring Forth
of the
Emerging Universe

PRAIRIEWOODS STAFF

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Spiritual Director

Aaron Brewer
Land Sustainability
Coordinator

Derek Doan
Cook

Joann Gehling, FSPA
Holistic Services, Spiritual
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Maintenance Coordinator

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Spiritual Director &
Retreat Facilitator

Jean Sullivan
Outreach, Engagement &
Hospitality Coordinator

Lucille Winnike, FSPA
Retreats, Spiritual
Director

Leslie Wright
Director

Ali Yoka
Chef & Kitchen Manager



"We need to open ourselves up to the God who is forever seeking to reach us—in and through the creation itself."

—Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Ecological Spirituality*, p. 73

These words challenge us to pay attention to what creation is (and has been) attempting to share with us from the very beginning. Ann Jackson, PBVM, gave me a copy of Diarmuid O'Murchu's new book *Ecological Spirituality* a few weeks ago and it felt like an answer to a prayer! I had been wrestling with questions such as: What do we mean when we talk about ecological spirituality? How can we speak about complex ideas in an accessible and inspirational way? What are the questions we should be asking ourselves now?

O'Murchu reassured me I am not alone in wrestling with the meaning of ecological spirituality. I am challenged and inspired when he describes the "deep interconnectedness between transcendent Spirit-power and its energetic influence on every living organism, human and nonhuman alike" (p. 3).

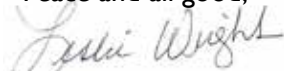
Eco-spirituality is the foundation of Prairie Woods' mission and guiding principles. Informed by these core concepts named by O'Murchu for almost thirty years now. Eco-spirituality:

- is not bound to any one religious tradition
- rejects dualistic splits, between humans, sacred and secular, spirit and matter
- requires us to examine our assumptions and our interpretation of history—especially as it is expressed in theology and culture
- is centered in a sense of oneness
- is informed by "multi-disciplinary wisdom" that integrates and transcends science, theology and ancient wisdom for an evolutionary worldview.

So, what does this look like in practice? How shall we live into these principles in community—with this beautiful land, humans and non-humans alike. How shall we practice our ecological spirituality in such a way that it inspires and influences others beyond the boundaries of Prairie Woods?

Beginning this summer, Prairie Woods will explore these big ideas in our upcoming newsletters. We will begin with the Universe Story, which has been central to the mission here. It is a story of energy, transformative relationship and the endless creativity found in the Source of All Being. It is our origin story and tells the 14-billion-year history of the universe. If you'd like to learn more about the Universe Story, we invite you to walk the Cosmic Walk on the Prairie Woods trails. This walk is a physical depiction of the story of the universe and helps ground us in its reality. Come walk with us!

Peace and all good,


Leslie A. Wright



Prairie Woods is an 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: Prairie Woods 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 Prairie Woods 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 Prairie Woods perspective.

Please address all correspondence to:

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(continued from page 1)

In contrast, the biocentric New Story recognizes the intrinsic value and interdependence of ALL life forms on Earth.

Human wellbeing depends on the health of the entire planet. This new ecological consciousness positions humans differently, engendering a sense of awe and reverence for Earth and the entire cosmos. Informed by the findings of contemporary science, particularly in cosmology, biology and ecology, the New Story integrates scientific discoveries with wisdom from various religious, indigenous and spiritual traditions. It calls for us to shift from seeing humans as separate and superior to nature to *recognizing our role* as participants in a larger, sacred community of life. Science, nature and spirituality are intricately interconnected.

Founded in 1996, Prairiewoods is rooted in the New Universe Story

At Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center, Berry's New Universe Story finds practical application. The founding Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration dedicated themselves to fostering ecological awareness and spiritual growth through a deep connection with the natural world and engaging in environmental stewardship. The center's mission was birthed out of Berry's vision, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life and the sacredness of Earth.

The New Universe Story and *environmental education* direct Prairiewoods initiatives and offerings of workshops, retreats and programs. All delve into that interconnectedness of life, encouraging guests to develop a deeper understanding of their place in the cosmos. All 70 acres of Prairiewoods' land, which features woodlands, prairies and wetlands, serve as a living classroom. Guests of all ages and cultures experience firsthand the beauty and complexity of the universe.

Berry's epiphany moved his and our understanding of the world and our place in it forward, shifting from the limited view of Sir Isaac Newton and Descartes, who thought the universe was fixed and complete, to the expansive ideas of Albert Einstein and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Other thinkers and activists—including the 100Grannies Uniting for a Livable Future and Swedish climate protection activist Greta Thunberg—continue to embody an emerging universe, a universe alive and evolving. How we understand this and what we do with these insights is critical at this time in history. "What's your pledge? What's your practice?" asks psychologist Rick Hanson.

Prairiewoods Integrates Theology, Science and the Arts

At Prairiewoods, communal gardening, land

conservation projects and promoting eco-friendly practices model the importance of sustainable living. Ecological awareness is spiritual awareness. *Retreats and programs centered on ecological spirituality incorporate contemplative practices* from diverse faith traditions and indigenous cultures. Through massage, yoga, nature and labyrinth walks, meditation sessions in nature assist individuals to connect spiritually with Earth. Major shifts continue to emerge as religion and science find common ground for dialogue and action.

Scientists, awed by the mystery of the universe, experience the mystical through their work. Theologians are turning to scientists to understand the Source of All Being. Both offer new ways to understand the Divine, Earth and ourselves as spiritual beings. We move from a God who is wholly transcendent, above creation, out there, beyond, to a sense of the Divine who acts from within each of us and in all of creation. Humanity and Nature and Scripture—all reveal the Divine!

Prairiewoods incorporates art, music and ritual into its programming, reflecting Berry's belief in the *importance of creative expression in nurturing a holistic relationship with Earth*. These activities not only enrich the spiritual lives of guests; they cultivate and reveal a profound appreciation for the beauty, awe, wonder and diversity of the natural world.

Prairiewoods is committed to fostering and engaging an ongoing *learning community with shared responsibility for Earth*. The center hosts events that gather persons with diverse perspectives to explore common ecological and spiritual concerns. Echoing Berry's call for a collective awakening to our ecological challenges, Prairiewoods invites guests to become engaged global, Earth citizens.

Sustainability is a central focus at Prairiewoods. The center's facilities are designed with ecologically friendly principles, featuring solar panels, straw-bale construction and organic gardens. These demonstrate ecological principles that can be integrated into daily life. Furthermore, food choices, models of collaborative leadership, treatment of natural resources and how we farm ... all reflect interdependence. As the universe evolves, it becomes more and more diverse. We are invited to understand and celebrate the diversity of "truths."

Thomas Berry's New Universe Story calls for a deep, transformative shift in how we perceive and interact with Earth and all its inhabitants. Prairiewoods embodies this ecological consciousness through its commitment to ecological education, ecological spiritual growth, creative expression and community engagement.

For more inspiration and some resources, see pages 4–5.

Reflecting on the Universe Story

“According to the Universe Story, we are star dust. And so is every rock, every tree, every bird, every animal, every human. Literally everything we know is made up of the same primordial elements. And this fact alone is proof that we are interconnected to all life on Earth and to the Earth herself. We are not separate; we are one.



Imagine how different life would be if we made choices that were rooted in our interconnectedness—if we saw all life as a reflection of ourselves, if we linked our wellbeing with the wellbeing of all life. This awareness is essential if we wish to co-create a world that is regenerative, just, peaceful and flourishing.

The Universe Story reminds us that we humans arrived here such a short time ago, and yet we’ve managed to so alter our world that our actions are threatening all life on the planet. We don’t have billions of years to figure out how to reverse climate change or to heal the generational traumas that perpetuate oppression, cruelty and wars. But we do have billions of years of energy and evolutionary experience living within each of us and a deep knowing of our belonging and interconnection to Earth and all her inhabitants. Fueled by this awareness, I’d like to believe that we can bring about a healing transformation in as little time as it took us to cause such great harm. The Universe Story calls us to make changes now that will bring us back into alignment with our cosmological truth for the wellbeing of all.”

—Kathleen Rude,
www.prairiewoods.org/blog

“If the world is to be healed through human efforts, I am convinced it will be by ordinary people, people whose love for this life is even greater than their fear.”



—Joanna Macy and Chris Johnson, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in without Going Crazy*

“We exist, grow, and flourish because the creation we inhabit makes all that possible. And yet we are, like all other life organisms, totally unique. Our uniqueness, however, is not in lording it over all other lifeforms—as often understood by the mastery of life reference in Genesis 1:26—but in bringing our uniqueness to the table of mutual interaction with all other living organisms. That uniqueness is often stated as follows: We are creation becoming conscious of itself. Our self-consciousness and the consciousness of creation are of one and the same substance. Having received from creation the capacity to be aware, the quality and depth of our awareness contributes to and enriches the consciousness of creation. The mutual enrichment of that process very much depends on the quality of our attention and intention. How sensitively aware are we to what is happening within and around us? What is the quality of intention (desiring) that we bring to all our life engagements?”



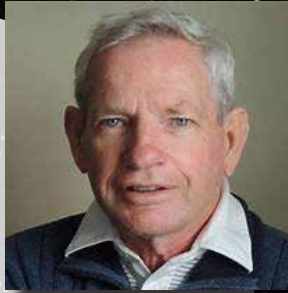
—Diarmuid O’Murchu, *Ecological Spirituality*

Join us for retreats with:

- Kathleen Rude
- Diarmuid O’Murchu &
- Barbara Mahany!

See pages 6–7 for details.

“The story itself unfolds throughout the prayers and reflections. It is a story of all life existing in God, of God’s creative Spirit always and everywhere active as the universe itself bursts forth and as life develops on this planet. It is a story telling us that we ourselves give the mystery we call God a way of coming to expression. In this story God is never absent, never distant. Life is not a journey to God; it is a journey in God ... The ‘New Story,’ unknown to our ancestors, challenges all religious people to think in a religiously inclusive way. We must take into account all of creation and all human beings when we speak of God being present and active. Such an inclusive understanding has the capacity to heal, educate, and transform the human community.”
—Michael Morwood, *Praying a New Story*



“The new universe story is the intercommunion of life itself, of each part with the whole. Everything is in communion in the vast web of the universe. The intense communion within the material world enables life to emerge into being ... We have an invitation to go to church in a new way, by praying before the new leaves budding through dormant trees or the wobbly flowers by the side of the road pushing through the solid earth ... (Like Francis of Assisi,) we too can sing with the air we breathe, the sun that shines upon us, the rain that pours down to water the earth ... For we are Easter people, and we are called to celebrate the whole earth as the body of Christ. Every act done in love gives glory to God: a pause of thanksgiving, a laugh, a gaze at the sun, or just raising a toast to your friends at your virtual gathering.”
—Ilia Delio, *The Hours of the Universe: Reflections on God, Science, and the Human Journey*



“To turn the pages of the Book of Nature is to come to know the elegy, the language of grief, of sorrow, of heart-piercing brokenness. The small-scale heart breaks, the ones that fall from your trees, or land by your toes, they hurt plenty. But the ones on the global scale, they’re grief squared, and squared again. Or they should be. And the alarm is sounding louder than ever. The echoes rise all around. When the forest burns, and the skies thicken with smoke. When the river runs murky, or worse. And the lake turns red from a toxic bloom. Be it tsunami or cyclone, drought or hundred-year flood. Or a pandemic that locks down the globe for all of two years, leaving a death count in millions ... ‘We no longer read the Book of Nature,’ wrote theologian Thomas Berry in his call to attend *The Great Work*. ‘We no longer coordinate our human celebrations with the great liturgies of the heavens ... We have silenced too many of those wonderful voices of the universe that spoke to us of the grand mysteries of existence.’”
—Barbara Mahany, *The Book of Nature: The Astonishing Beauty of God’s First Sacred Text*



For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

The Power of Silence: July Silent Directed Retreat (in person)

Sunday, July 7, 4 p.m.– Saturday, July 13, 1 p.m.

This retreat also offered Oct. 6–12!

Facilitators: Cindy Dunn; Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? Silent Directed Retreats offer opportunities to enter into deep silence to sense what it feels like to awaken a quiet and palpable connection with the Source of All Being. Each day you will receive ongoing direction as you and a professionally-trained spiritual director intentionally listen to the movement of the Source of All Being in your heart. Silence assists you to get in touch with feelings, thoughts and actions as you reflect, meditate, pray and rest. Silence deepens the capacity to sense the movement of the Source of All Being within the whole of your life. Sharing with a professional may bring you clarity, deepen your commitment and accountability to the direction of your life. We try to hold any outside stimulation to a minimum so that everything—the silence, solitude, reflective activities, meals, etc.—supports your journey within. A daily centering practice is offered. Optional reflective activities such as artwork, yoga and singing bowl meditation are available throughout the week.

Fee: \$525 includes lodging, meals and spiritual direction (*Partial scholarships are available.*)



Finding Peace in Mothering Retreat (in person)

Friday, July 26, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, July 28, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Tammy Bayer & Rev. Jean Sullivan

Explore our “mothering journey,” not only how we currently mother, but also how we were mothered and how we want to mother in the future. Join nurturers in community and conversations, rejuvenate and relax through healing practices to send you home revitalized, resourced and reconnected. Friday evening, we will spend some time getting to know each other, unwinding and caring for ourselves. Our Saturday includes gentle yoga movement, breathwork, time in nature and opportunities for connection, rest and self-reflection. After we wrap up on Sunday morning, you'll find yourself refreshed and ready to return to your mothering role with fresh eyes and a plan to care for yourself. Participants will gain a recognition of what influences their beliefs in their mothering values; identify parental beliefs vs. parental practices; be able to describe who they are at their core: before, during and after mothering; identify practices that will support them in “filling their own cup” for the long haul of mothering; explore mindful movement, relaxation techniques, guided meditation, energy work/ chakras and grounding practices; and make connections in a warm



and protected space. **NOTE:** You do not have to be a birth mother to enjoy or benefit from this event. This is for anyone who mothers others.

Fee: \$255 includes presentations, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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

Navigating Transitions: A Path to Reset & Renew Retreat (in person)

Friday, Aug. 2, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Aug. 3, 3 p.m.

Facilitators: Jill Saunders & Leslie Schwarting

Are you currently facing a transition, either big or small? Have you experienced a change in your job status, a divorce, empty nesting or loss of a loved one? Are you searching for some meaning and clarity on what next? In this overnight retreat, you'll be treated to a path forward that will help you to reset and renew as you navigate your transition. Come for a heart-centered, guided journey where you will:

- learn a map for how to navigate your transition, a map that gives you insights and permission to step forward in your truth
- practice acceptance for your journey, and consider the healing power of accepting what is
- play with a resiliency toolkit and spiritual practices to provide you with renewal for your transition
- clarify your core values and gain insight on how living in alignment with your deepest values can propel you forward
- experience the wisdom of your future self and the guidance it has to shape a meaningful vision of possibility
- get clear on your focus for the next six months to one year
- learn practices to focus your energy on what's most important and more!

Fee: \$175 includes presentations, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes presentations and Saturday lunch



Active Hope for a Troubled World Retreat (in person)

Friday, Aug. 9, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Aug. 11, 3 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathleen Rude

Whether you're troubled about the state of the world or struggling with personal challenges, you'll find a safe and sacred place in this retreat to honor your feelings and discover that you are not alone. Working with the transformative power of The Work That Reconnects process, you will be embraced in a compassionate experience that will ground you in gratitude and allow you to honor your pain, feel your



interconnectedness to all life and embrace your unique Light for making a difference in your life and in the world. This weekend retreat will offer you a supportive community, transformative rituals, healing time on the land, deep sharing, quiet reflection, song, movement and celebration.

Fee: \$255 includes presentations, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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

Becoming the Elder Tree: Purpose in the Second Half of Life Retreat (in person)

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

Facilitators: Thomas Dean & Chris Johnson

This weekend retreat invites you to envision a second half of life that calls forth your truest self and unique purpose and to consider what it means to be an “elder” in the deepest sense: when our lived years contribute to a special wisdom, vision and wholeness of self that are shared for the benefit of the community and society. We will place the development of elderhood in the context of our interdependent relationships with the more-than-human world, from nature outside our window all the way out through our entire solar system, the world soul and the greater universe story. Inspired by ecologist Suzanne Simard’s revelations about how forests are communities that are cooperative, collaborative, communicative and reciprocal, we will consider how we can be the elder trees that nurture, support and pass wisdom to others for the health and wellbeing of the entire community. Prairiewoods’ revered Grandmother Oak will thus be our touchstone and inspiration for the weekend. This retreat will follow the Circle of Trust® approach developed by Parker Palmer and the Center for Courage and Renewal. This retreat will welcome participants of all ages and at any stage of life.

Fee: \$255 includes presentations, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship—Autumn Table (in person)

Friday, Sept. 6, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Sept. 7, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Michael Pollan wrote, “What would happen, for example, if we were to start thinking about food as less of a thing and more of a relationship?” Harvest is just beginning! Nurturing body and spirit, autumn harvest foods play a significant role in fostering peace at personal, community and global levels. Come celebrate and reflect on new ways of nourishing and promoting health of self, local and global community and Earth.



Fee: \$175 includes presentations, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes presentations and Saturday lunch

The Book of Nature: The Astonishing Beauty of God’s First Sacred Text (hybrid)

Wednesdays; Sept. 11, Sept. 25, Oct. 2 & Oct. 9; 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Barbara Mahany (author will attend via Zoom)

The Book of Nature: The Astonishing Beauty of God’s First Sacred Text, by Barbara Mahany, is a deep-dive into an ancient and timeless theology that sees all creation as “theophany,” a lens through which to catch a glimpse of the sacred, be it in the dapplings of sunlight, the percussions of storm or the susurrations of prairie grasses playing with the wind. At its core, it’s a book about seeing and a book about reading. And it weaves threads from all religions, drawing especially from ancient Celtic and Jewish traditions where the natural world is the lens through which the sacred is perceived and illuminated. It’s been written that *The Book of Nature* is “a field guide into the depths of your holiest places.” Over the course of four weeks, in sessions lasting an hour and a half each, we will read and engage with Barbara’s book and with our own “pages” from the Book of Nature that is inscribed in all of creation.

Commuter Fee: \$100 for the four-week series



Diarmuid O’Murchu returns!

Ecological Spirituality: New Horizons for the 21st Century Retreat (hybrid)

Wednesday, Sept. 25–Friday, Sept. 27, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. daily

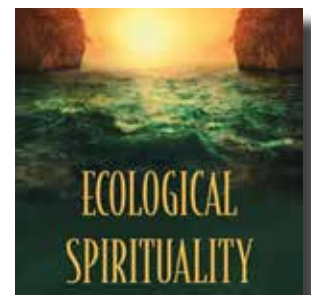
Facilitator: Diarmuid O’Murchu (author will attend via Zoom)

Most of us are not aware of the fact that we live within the context of a world-view (a way of being in the world and understanding it). Thanks to new scientific insights of the 20th century, our sense of the world has expanded enormously. For over 50 years now, we have been inspired by geologist Thomas Berry and others on the pioneering work of the New Universe Story. How to ground that vision—ecologically and spiritually—remains a formidable challenge, the aspects of which will be explored in this retreat/workshop. Come spend the mornings with us as we welcome Diarmuid O’Murchu online from Ireland. Spend the afternoon and evenings in reflection at Prairiewoods or in your own home.

Fee: \$230 includes Wednesday and Thursday lodging and Wednesday lunch through Friday lunch

Commuter Fee: \$150 includes three morning presentations and daily lunch

Online Fee: \$100 includes three morning presentations



Save the Date!

for these upcoming retreats:

Digital Detox: An Unplugged Experience (in person) with Leslie Schwarting, Sept. 27–29

The Power of Silence: October Silent Directed Retreat (in person) with Cindy Dunn; Eric Evans; Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA; Oct. 6–12

Cultivating Love & Trust in Times of Change Retreat (in person) with Karen Hering, Oct. 25–27

Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat (in person) with Chris Klug, Nov. 1–3

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship—Winter Table (in person) with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Nov. 8–9

The Cup of Our Life Retreat (in person) with Pastor Amy Eisenmann, Nov. 9–10

Winter's Wisdom Retreat (in person) with Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel, Dec. 13–15

Day of Self Renewal (in person) Mondays, July 1 & Aug. 12; & Thursdays, July 25 & Aug. 1; 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl meditation, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Services may include massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, qigong, forest therapy, yoga or chair yoga. Visit www.Prairiewoods.org for details.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three service choices are required eight days in advance.

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

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person) Mondays, July 1 & Aug. 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 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. Registration is required by noon.

Fee: \$10

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Afternoon Nature & Forest Therapy: Mondays, July 1 & Aug. 12, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon: Saturday, July 20, & Monday, Aug. 19, 7–9 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.” This is a trauma informed practice, and all are welcome. This is not exercise or hiking; it is a slow, sensory walk with the land. Registration is required by the previous day.

Fee: \$15 for afternoon sessions, \$20 for longer evening sessions

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays; July 1, July 15, Aug. 5 & Aug. 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 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. Registration is required. **Fee:** \$12 per session

On the Cusp of Change: Preparing for the Journey (Zoom) Tuesday, July 9, 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and better understand our choices in living with change, whether it's personal or global? This yearlong series of twelve stand-alone online programs and three in-person retreats takes a deeper dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of the present day. On the second Tuesday of each month (except August), Karen will lead an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus on how to make change more trustworthy. On July 9, we'll talk about preparing for the journey.

Fee: \$15

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

Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them): Wednesdays, July 10 & Aug. 14, 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: Wednesdays, July 17 & Aug. 21, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW

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. These monthly grief groups are open to anyone grieving loss through death. In July, we'll explore imprinting on air dry clay discs to make nature designs. In August, we'll explore paint splattering, as beautiful things can come from messy beginnings. Registration is required one week in advance.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the family group)

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

Thursdays, July 11–Aug. 29, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Based on age-old Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), this gentle and accessible class involves meditative, healing energy and compassion-based standing movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice. We begin by opening, rebalancing and cultivating Qi (universal life force energy-Spirit) throughout the body's energy pathways, centers and organs to assist with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Class ends with seated meditation, which includes sending healing compassionate intention to others and the planet.

Fee: \$12 per session

Drum Circle (in person)

Saturday, July 13, 6–8 p.m.; & Sunday, Aug. 11, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Join Drum Iowa and Prairiewoods for a wonderful outdoor drum circle (weather permitting). Don't forget your drums! (We also will have instruments available for you to borrow.) You don't need to be a magnificent drummer or musician to enjoy this fun time. Spectators are welcome, and we'll have you drumming in no time! Registration is not necessary.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 (but this is a free event for all to enjoy)

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Wednesdays, July 17 & Aug. 21, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Ali Yoka & Derek Doan

Tired of the same old lunch places? Let's renew our bodies and refresh our spirits in a beautiful setting! Join us for YOLO (*Your Other Lunch Option*)—a lunch choice celebrating wholesome, fresh food made from scratch by our chefs. We dine in a community setting with friends we bring with us or new friends we meet over a delicious themed lunch. Check our website for monthly themes. Feel free to arrive at 11:30, and the buffet line opens at noon. Registration is required by the previous Friday.

Fee: \$15 per lunch

Blood Drive (in person)

Wednesday, July 17, 3–5 p.m.

Facilitator: ImpactLife Blood Center

This blood drive is open to all! Giving blood is a great way to help people, including those fighting cancer, undergoing surgery or involved in a trauma. Please join us in supporting those in our community who need this life-saving assistance!

Fee: Free

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays, July 25 & Aug. 1, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing, penetrating power of healing sound and vibration via singing bowls. Then drop into deepest levels of relaxation and peace through authentic, age-old Yogic Sleep (yoga nidra)—a reclined, meditative experience used by stress reduction clinics, integrative health care and mystics who savor resting in blissful Oneness with The Sacred. We will close with prayerful sound healing, including a lower-octave bowl played on or near (your choice) the shrine of your heart.

Fee: \$10 per session

Rock Mandala Painting for the Whole Family (in person)

Saturday, Aug. 3, 1–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Spend a few hours creating art with your favorite people! 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. 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 will be a great activity to do as a family before school starts!

Fee: \$15 per person includes all supplies



Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (hybrid)

Wednesday, Aug. 7, 3–4:30 p.m. or 5:15–6:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

Based upon the belief that love is the fundamental energy of evolution, we gather in community, recognizing that we have the opportunity to co-create the universe and participate in the energy of evolution. These groups are formed as spaces of deep relationality with a vision to heal our world and transform lives through the real-world experience of communal reflection, shared friendship and collective spiritual practice based on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin and the authors who interpret and advance his vision.

Fee: Free-will offering

Harvest Labyrinth Walk (in person)

Thursday, Aug. 8, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Wright

Are you seeking clarity during a time of transition? Walk the labyrinth with us!



August and September are often a time of change, harvest and new beginnings. Many find that time in the labyrinth offers a sacred space to allow our minds to relax and open—to ask a question, perhaps to hear something we never have before or to experience and be present to the moment we are in. Walking the labyrinth can ground us in unsettled times. Come join us in the outdoor labyrinth for a chance to slow down, pay attention, and connect mind, body and spirit in a deeper way. We will gather for a brief introduction at 5:45 and begin walking at 6 p.m.

Fee: Free

Art as a Mindful Way to Connect with Nature (in person)

Saturday, Aug. 24, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitators: Jacob & Rebecca Lesan

Most people hurry through the woods, counting calories burned. Artists take the slow approach, with bare

feet on ground, sketchbook in hand and an eye ready to enjoy everything around them. Deeply connect with the outdoors through nature journaling in this creative morning spent in the woods.

Fee: \$10



Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony (in person)

Saturday, Aug. 24, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2, ceremony starts at 4)

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

The Sweat Lodge Ceremony pre-dates recorded history and was practiced in some form by every culture in the world. These sweats were held for reasons ranging from relaxation and socialization to healing and purification. Join us for a sweat focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing. During the ceremony, we sit on the earth in the lodge, a small dome-shaped structure. Heated stones are placed in the center of the lodge and the water pourer, or leader, pours water over the stones to create steam. There are four rounds that include the singing of sacred songs, and after each round the lodge door is opened for more stones to be brought in. *Please note that the lodge is a small enclosure that is dark and extremely hot inside. If you have claustrophobia or any medical conditions that prevent you from going into a sauna, you should not participate in this ceremony.* Please visit our website for safety protocols and to register. You will be asked to sign a release form.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 to Prairiewoods for materials

Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; July 1–Aug. 29 (except July 4); 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga) & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga.

Fee: \$120 for eleven-punch card, \$72 for six-punch card or \$15 for single class

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, July 9 & Aug. 13, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, July 24 & Aug. 28, 6–8 p.m.

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity. All are welcome!

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; July 9, July 23, Aug. 13 & Aug. 27; 5:30–7 p.m.

Practice a contemplative form of prayer to help deepen your relationship with God or Source of All Being.

Fee: Free-will offering

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, July 11–Aug. 29, 4–5 p.m.

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics.

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second & fourth Thursdays, Aug. 8 & Aug. 22, 4–5:30 p.m.

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes. Please note that this group will not meet in July.

Fee: Free-will offering

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

first & third Thursdays; July 18, Aug. 1 & Aug. 15; 7–8:30 p.m.

Practice contemplative living to respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections.

Fee: Free-will offering

One Participant's Reflections on Evening Centering Prayer

Like many of you, often I'm curious about programming I haven't tried. Last month I leaned in by trying Evening Centering Prayer. With the guidance of Judith Smith, I learned about the roots of centering prayer and practiced on a Tuesday evening at Prairiewoods.

Evening Centering Prayer consists of two 20-minute "sits" in which participants are silent and yet full of intention. Judith explained that we choose a sacred word and/or feeling. These are meant

to embody and invite the presence and action within of God (or Spirit). Judith used *courage*, and I used *breath*. (Don't worry, you don't have to share your word!) Within the sit I would return to *breath* when I felt myself noticing other thoughts or feelings. Toward the end of each sit, Judith would quietly ring a bowl to return our awareness to the room. In *Manifesting God*, Father Thomas Keating writes, "God just is—without any limitation. And the way to connect with this 'Is-ness' is to just be, too."

As a practice, centering prayer is meant to connect each individual to the Source of all Being. Judith recommends the works of Keating as a further resource, as well as the group Contemplative Outreach. In my experience, centering prayer was a reminder of my connection to that Source, and a reminder—within each breath, for just a few minutes—of what it feels like to just be.

—Robert Hogg,
Prairiewoods Program Assistant

Evening Centering Prayer meets at Prairiewoods on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 5:30–7 p.m. Join us!

New Volunteer Perks

We're gearing up for our busy season, both indoors and out, and we would love to find some new volunteers to help us give great hospitality to our guests and maintain our beautiful grounds and gardens. Beginning in June, any new or current volunteer that works at least a three-hour shift can take a free monthly class of their choice. To fill out a volunteer application please visit www.prairiwoods.org/volunteer-application. Groups are welcome too!

Our current volunteer needs include:

1. Land Care & Maintenance

Volunteers: You'll play an important role in carrying out our sustainability mission on our 70 acres of woodlands and prairie. Work varies by season and according to the weather, but includes trail maintenance, gardening, invasive species removal, harvesting, plowing, mowing, woodworking, and other specific conservation or building projects.

2. Hospitality Volunteers:

Front office volunteers play a critical role in carrying out our mission. Our guests come to Prairiwoods for many reasons, including attending a class, meeting or retreat. Your duties will include greeting our guests, checking them in, answering the phone and providing other administrative support as needed. Shifts are predominantly nights and weekends.

3. Garden Volunteers: Do you love to garden? We have lots of different gardens here, and our volunteers help us weed, water, harvest produce, and plant vegetables or flowers. Most hours are during the day, but weekend accommodations can be made.

4. Kitchen Volunteers: We serve meals to many of our guests and try to make as much as possible from scratch. We would love to have some kitchen volunteers who could help do meal prep or bake deserts or breads. If you love to be in the kitchen, this is the opportunity for you!

Free classes you could take include Yoga, Qigong, Singing Bowl Meditations or Rock Mandala Painting. Please visit our website to find descriptions of each class.

- You must complete your volunteer hours prior to taking the class.
- All volunteers will need to register by phone for the class they're taking, and participation is based on space availability.



Nature Playscape Welcomes All

It all started in 2022 when Prairiwoods staff saw a presentation by an Iowa BIG student to build a Nature Playscape in the Cedar Rapids area. Iowa BIG is a project-based learning school where students leave their school to collaborate with businesses and nonprofits to build real-life skills and create something they are passionate about. Students conducted thorough research, working with local conservation groups like Backyard Abundance to develop a plan of action, with one of the key goals being to reclaim as many building materials as possible. For the past two school years, Prairiwoods has become a classroom for eight students to construct a mud and water kitchen, music walls, climbing logs, seesaws, chalkboards, table games, a theatre and seating areas for parents.

With the increasing amount of time children spend on screens in their schools and at home leading to diminished attention spans, increased depression, poor grades, higher levels of aggression, obesity and reduced vitamin D intake, the Prairiwoods Nature Playscape is a great structure to combat that epidemic. Former longtime teacher and Prairiwoods Foundress Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, is tickled about the new development on the land and the creative space it offers young children. Prairiwoods invites students, neighbors and the community to come visit and discover the beauty of letting your children explore as they get their hands dirty. The Prairiwoods Nature Playscape is located near the Four Winds Food Forest on the northwest edge of the land.



We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiwoods! For a complete, up-to-date list of donors and volunteers, please visit www.Prairiwoods.org/Donate.



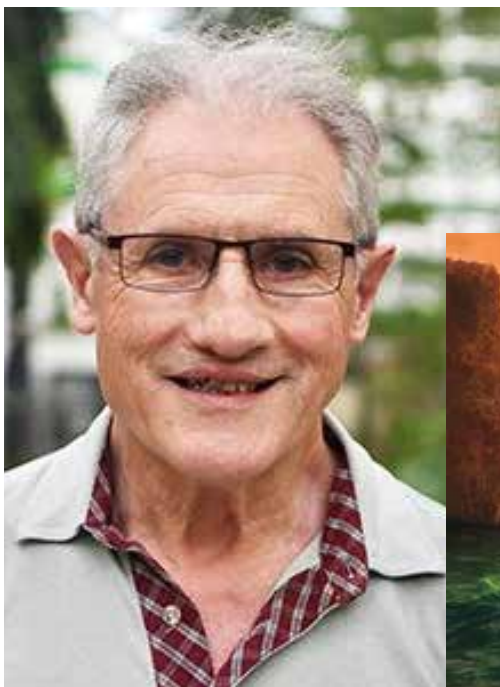
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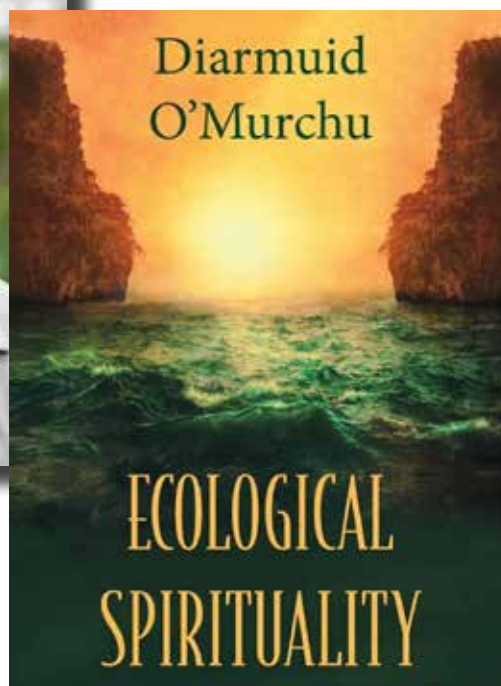
You may send this by mail, email ecospirit@prairiewoods.org or call **319-395-6700**. If mailed, please include this address label.

- Please send your mailings electronically to _____.
- Please take us off your mailing list.
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Are you on social media? Find “Prairiewoods FSC” on:



Diarmuid O'Murchu returns!



Popular Spirituality in the 21st Century facilitator Diarmuid O'Murchu will offer a hybrid retreat Sept. 25–27, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. daily.

Together we'll explore ecological spirituality and how our current worldview impacts all of our experiences. Learn about how you can join him on page 7.

September/October 2024

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

transcending

DUALISM

DOCTRINE

*Healing What
Divides Us*

Second in our series exploring the characteristics of ecological spirituality is an examination of dualism versus non-dualism. First, what does *dualism* mean?

Dualism (noun)

1. a theory that considers reality to consist of two irreducible (cannot be reduced or simplified) elements or modes
2. a doctrine that the universe is under the dominion of two opposing principles, one of which is good and the other evil
3. a view of human beings as constituted of two irreducible (cannot be reduced or simplified) elements (such as matter and spirit)

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary online

According to Richard Rohr, dualistic thinking creates a system of false choices and too-simple contraries. Picture being in the chair at the eye doctor's office and answering, "Which lens is clearer, 1 or 2?" That is dualism in its simplest form. We have been trained to choose "this *or* that." Our world is locked onto dualism as a way of organizing ourselves and how we understand the "rules" of living. We humans seek safety in boundaries and certainties and often choose sides. Every generation has learned the painful lesson that little is certain in life and the "answers" are more complex than we had hoped. Ironically, leaning into non-dualism and a more expansive view is the antidote to division. The limitations of dualistic thinking "cannot process things like infinity, mystery, God, grace, suffering, sexuality, death or love" (Richard Rohr, Center for Action and Contemplation, Jan. 28, 2017). What if we employed a "wider lens" to the world?

What happens when we apply a dualistic mindset to ourselves? When we think of ourselves as separate containers of mind, body and spirit? We experience dissonance (inconsistencies between our beliefs and actions) and suffering. The truth is that we are an integrated and inseparable whole. We are a compilation of multiple dimensions that weave together uniquely in each person.

(continued on page 3)



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"To turn the tide toward flourishing, we need new ways to address spiritual longings. We need spiritual innovation."

—Sacred Design Lab

The outcome of ecological spirituality is measured by mutual flourishing and an ongoing evolutionary becoming. This premise applies to humans and all of creation. We who believe in ecological spirituality believe in the ongoing creativity that enlivens all of us.

Prairiewoods has been engaged in fostering evolutionary becoming and mutual flourishing since before the doors even opened in 1996. It began with the sisters walking the land to sense what was emerging. They tuned in to the cry of the land and the needs of the community and responded by building a place to heal, renew and awaken. Inspired by their Franciscan roots, they created a space that would nourish the essential connections between self, others, Earth and our Creator.


What does this evolutionary becoming look like? It is by its very nature expansive and forward looking. Its energy derives from curiosity, anticipation and faith in potential. For Prairiewoods the place and Prairiewoods the people—it looks like discerning and investing our gifts. We are exploring, listening, weaving and welcoming. We are conscious of our past, present and future all at once.

"The universal human is one who is connected through the heart to the whole of life, attuned to the deeper intelligence of nature and called forth irresistibly by spirit to creatively express [their] gifts in the evolution of self and the world."

—Barbara Marx Hubbard

Evolutionary becoming is not passive. It is a co-creative process full of possibility. I feel that energy here at Prairiewoods. This fall we will engage in an evolutionary planning retreat. We will gather all that we have learned and all that we believe the universe is asking of us. Then we will begin to outline the road map for our continued "becoming." Our greatest desire is to rise to the call and invest our gifts exuberantly in the service of mutual flourishing.

Peace and all good,


Leslie A. Wright



Prairiewoods is an 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)

What happens when we separate people into groups? We create one-dimensional profiles of people when the truth of them is more beautiful, varied and complex. The iceberg of identity is often used in diversity training to help people move beyond the surface appearances of difference.

Looking at the iceberg, how many dimensions of your identity can you name? What might you learn if you explored these dimensions with others? Prairiewoods' founders, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, call us to be people committed to building bridges of relationship and celebrating unity in diversity. There is in all of us a yearning for belonging and connection. When we act on this and find opportunities to explore our points of intersection, it improves our sense of wellbeing. It reduces our sense of isolation.

"In a quantum universe, where everything is entangled, connectedness, not the clarity of separation, really matters."

—Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Ecological Spirituality*, p. 4

How can we move away from segmentation and our tendency toward a scientific deconstruction of our world? We cannot exist without Earth and the other members of the ecosystem(s) of which we are a part. What if we change the word *entangled*, which sounds messy and uncomfortable, to *enfolded*. That word brings to mind a sense of embrace within the arms of all creation. That is the actual quality of our existence. Embraced and woven into the very fabric of life.

Ecological spirituality maintains that there can be no separation from the Creator. There is no sacred versus secular. The Creator spirit is part of the energy, the breath and the matter that forms us. So if our notions of separateness are in fact false, how can we "widen our lens"?

As individuals, we can deepen our practice of contemplation and mindful attention. Douglas E. Christie suggests that "the simple act of gazing, of paying attention—one of the most ancient and enduring ways of understanding contemplative practice—can open up a space in the soul, a space in which the world may live and move in us."

Turning Toward vs. Turning on

There are numerous examples of people coming together to build bridges of relationship and celebrate human complexity. A Danish TV station created a video

IDENTITY ICEBERG

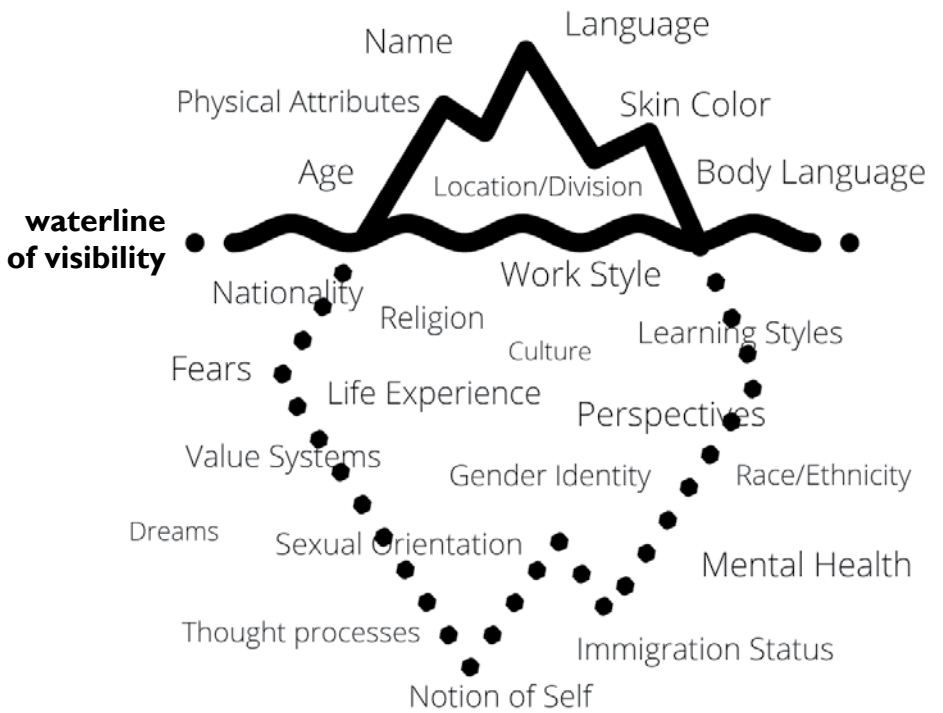


diagram by ThinkHuman

called "All We Share" several years ago to explore these unseen connections. The filmmakers brought together groups of people thought to be distinctly different from each other and asked simple questions, such as "Who among you is a stepparent?" "Who believes in life after death?" "Who is in love?" The results are surprising and inspiring. (Watch it at www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVOITc&list=WL&index=1.)

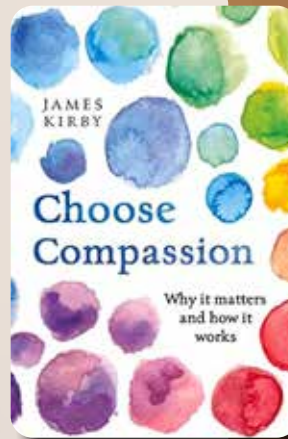
Building bridges of relationship doesn't have to be contentious. Nor does it require a film crew. We don't have to start with the hard questions. The National Public Housing Museum created a toolkit called 36 Questions for Civic Love (www.nphm.org/civiclove). Participants take turns asking each other a series of questions. The design encourages sharing and, perhaps more importantly, listening with curiosity. Questions include "What's your favorite kitchen smell?" and "Can you keep a plant alive?"

This is another rich example of people working on ways for us to connect and belong to each other versus creating separation and isolation. In every case, the transformation and healing are the result of *compassionate* and curious questions that arise from within every individual. A loving, compassionate gaze. This gift is first given to us by our Creator, which we in turn are called to share with each other. What will be possible when we seek to know versus categorize, convert or condemn? This shift will help us to make great strides toward a resilient, creative and hopeful unity.

Compassion: Healing Our Divides

Practicing compassion helps us heal our divisions and cross boundaries of difference. At Prairiewoods we strive to offer accessible resources for people to use in their journey of self discovery and spiritual renewal. The topic of compassion becomes more and more important as we think about our relationships and how we engage with those around us.

Recently, Rev. Jean Sullivan, Prairiewoods' Outreach, Engagement & Hospitality Coordinator, was invited to participate in the Mind & Life Summer Research Institute held in Garrison, New York. It was a week-long coming together of academics studying the personal and social impact of contemplative practices and those engaging in and educating people about those practices. The theme was Awakening Compassion During Times of Division.



Compassion is a sensitivity to suffering in yourself and others, with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it.

James N. Kirby, PhD, is a clinical psychologist and the codirector of the Compassionate Mind Research Group at the University of Queensland. His book *Choose Compassion: Why It Matters and How It Works* introduces us to the topic of compassion. Compassion, while built into all of us, is like a muscle. Healthy compassion requires intention and practice. Compassion features two basic processes: turning attention toward suffering and feeling motivated to do something about it.

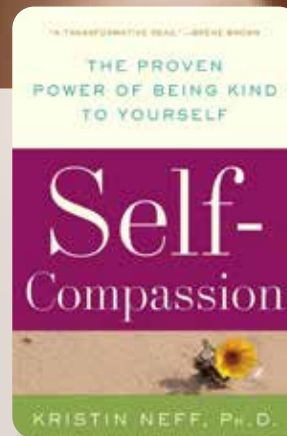
Research reveals three common ways we experience compassion: through self compassion, compassion for others and the act of receiving compassion from others. Together these experiences reinforce one another: when we open ourselves to be compassionate to others, we are reminded that we too need and deserve compassion. When that compassion is offered to us we are more willing to accept it gracefully and with gratitude.

Self Compassion

The capacity to express compassion for others does not guarantee compassion for self. And vice versa. Both need to be cultivated with intention. But without self compassion, we may not possess the resilience to offer compassion to others. According to Kristen Neff, associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Texas in Austin:

“One way to describe what it feels like to embody tender self-compassion is loving, connected presence, corresponding to kindness, common humanity and mindfulness. When we embrace our pain with kindness, we feel loving. When we remember our common humanity, we feel connected. When we’re mindful of our pain, we’re present. With loving, connected presence, our pain becomes bearable and begins to transform.”

A practice she recommends is to write a love letter to yourself. Note all the things you love about yourself. It will feel a little disorienting at first, yet after the first few sentences you will find that the tender compassion you offer to others is also available within.



“Our world needs a compassion revolution, and we need it now.”
—Dalai Lama

Compassion for Others

Compassion for others means we have developed our ability to be sensitive to signals of suffering, and we are motivated both to act and to ensure we do not cause suffering ourselves. If you would like to expand your sense of compassion for others, you may want to try *The*

Compassion Shift. It is an initiative of Emory University’s Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics to promote human flourishing and advance a global culture of compassion through a research-based approach to the cultivation of compassion.

You can engage with the program online. It includes explanations of how we can expand our understanding of compassion *and* how we can use daily mindfulness practices to become more compassionate. Explore what it’s about at compassionshift.emory.edu. It will be worth your time!

Compassion restores connections and helps us to act. Healthy compassion is built on a foundation of mindfulness. From mindful awareness grows the ability to shift perspectives and encounter more expansive possibilities.

Join us for a mindfulness experience to nurture your compassion:

- Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat, Friday, Nov. 1–Sunday, Nov. 3 (p. 7)
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Series, Tuesdays, Sept. 10–Oct. 29 (p. 8)
- Mindfulness at Prairiewoods (MAP), Mondays (p. 8)



Receiving Compassion

Research on the three ways we experience compassion demonstrates that receiving compassion is the most difficult for many of us. Receiving compassion and accepting help from others are reminders that we are not meant to live this life in isolation and demonstrates our vulnerability and humanness. Allowing yourself to receive compassion from another person says to the world: *I know I can’t do this alone. I appreciate your kindness.*

Here at Prairiewoods, we offer spiritual direction, the practice of meeting with a trained listener who actively and compassionately listens to the questions and concerns on your heart. Within that relationship, you have the opportunity to live your way into the answers and come away stronger. (Please see p. 11.)

For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship—Autumn Table Retreat (in person)

Friday, Sept. 6, 6:30 p.m.—Saturday, Sept. 7, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Harvest is just beginning!

Nurturing body and spirit, autumn harvest foods play a significant role in fostering peace at personal, community and global levels. Drawing on wisdom of mystics, saints and poets, let's honor the abundance of nature and how these foods provide an opportunity to transform our relationship with food at the individual, community and global levels. Come celebrate and reflect on new ways of connecting with how our food is grown and why this matters for personal and planetary health.

Fee: \$175 includes presentations, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes presentations and Saturday lunch



The Book of Nature: The Astonishing Beauty of God's First Sacred Text Retreat (hybrid)

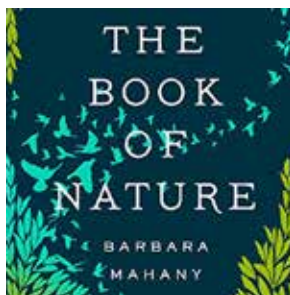
Wednesdays, Sept. 11, Sept. 25, Oct. 9 & Oct. 16; 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Barbara Mahany (author will attend via Zoom)

The Book of Nature: The

Astonishing Beauty of God's First Sacred Text, by Barbara Mahany, is a deep-dive into an ancient and timeless theology that sees all creation as “theophany,” a lens through which to catch a glimpse of the sacred, be it in the dapplings of sunlight, the percussions of storm or the susurrations of prairie grasses playing with the wind. At its core, it's a book about seeing and a book about reading. And it weaves threads from all religions, drawing especially from ancient Celtic and Jewish traditions where the natural world is the lens through which the sacred is perceived and illuminated. It's been written that *The Book of Nature* is “a field guide into the depths of your holiest places.” Over the course of four weeks, we will read and engage with Barbara's book and with our own “pages” from the Book of Nature that is inscribed in all of creation.

Commuter Fee: \$100 for the four-week series



Diarmuid O'Murchu returns!

Ecological Spirituality: New Horizons for the 21st Century Retreat (hybrid)

Wednesday, Sept. 25–Friday, Sept. 27, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. daily

Facilitator: Diarmuid O'Murchu (author will attend via Zoom)

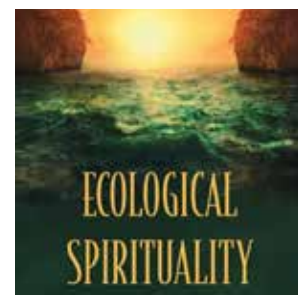
Most of us are not aware of the fact that we live within the context of a world-view (a way of being in the world and understanding it). Thanks to new scientific insights of the 20th century, our sense of the world has expanded enormously. For over 50 years now, we have been inspired by geologist Thomas Berry and others on the pioneering work of the New Universe Story. How to ground that vision—ecologically and spiritually—remains a formidable challenge, the aspects of which will be

explored in this retreat/workshop. Come spend the mornings with us as we welcome Diarmuid O'Murchu online from Ireland. Spend the afternoon and evenings in reflection at Prairiewoods or in your own home.

Fee: \$230 includes Wednesday and Thursday lodging and Wednesday lunch through Friday lunch

Commuter Fee: \$150 includes three morning presentations and daily lunch

Online Fee: \$100 includes three morning presentations



Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) 17 Retreat (in person)

Fridays, monthly beginning Sept. 27, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (9 a.m.–3 p.m. in September & May)

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Leslie Schwarting

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 (SEEL) 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 SEEL 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 Friday sessions (Sept. 27, Oct. 4, Nov. 1, Dec. 13, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4 and May 9). 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



Digital Detox: An Unplugged Experience (in person)

Friday, Sept. 27, 6 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 29, 11 a.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Depending on the data source, Americans spend between 4–7 HOURS daily on their phones. This doesn't account for time in front of computers and other devices. In this mini silent retreat, we invite



you to cut the cord for a weekend. Reconnect to your inner thoughts and your Divine Nature. Enjoy peaceful silence for an unscheduled weekend of quiet. Walk the trails, read, be creative, spend time on the labyrinth and participate in optional spiritual direction sessions. We invite you to see what emerges from a dedicated time of silence and reflection.

Fee: \$255 includes lodging, all Saturday meals and Sunday breakfast (*Lodgers only, please.*)

The Power of Silence: October Silent Directed Retreat (in person)

Sunday, Oct. 6, 4 p.m.–Saturday, Oct. 12, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Eric Evans; Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? Silent Directed Retreats offer opportunities to enter into deep silence to sense what it feels like to awaken a quiet and palpable connection with the Source of All Being. Each day you will receive ongoing direction as you and a professionally-trained spiritual director intentionally listen to the movement of the Source of All Being in your heart. Silence assists you to get in touch with feelings, thoughts and actions as you reflect, meditate, pray and rest. Silence deepens the capacity to sense the movement of the Source of All Being within the whole of your life. Sharing with a professional may bring you clarity and deepen your commitment and accountability to the direction of your life. We try to hold any outside stimulation to a minimum so that everything supports your journey within. Optional reflective activities such as artwork, yoga and singing bowl meditation are available throughout the week.

Fee: \$525 includes lodging, meals and spiritual direction (*Partial scholarships are available. Lodgers only, please.*)



Cultivating Love & Trust in Times of Change Retreat (in person)

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

Facilitator: Karen Hering

Change is rumbling in the ground beneath our feet. Growing conflicts, major elections and shifting weather patterns—as well as turns in our personal lives—all remind us that we are living in stormy transformative times of uncertainty. We need one another in new ways, and we need renewed capacities for love and trust. This is for all who wish to gather on the cusp of change to deepen our understandings and practices of giving and receiving a liberating love, of becoming trustworthy and trusting others, and of gaining skills to strengthen and sustain relationships we can rely on in the midst of change. We'll draw from the wisdom of bell hooks, James Baldwin, Sharon Salzberg and others, engaging guided reflection with writing, silence, conversation and embodied practices. The retreat will offer an experience and exploration of joy, creativity, love and trust.

Fee: \$255 includes presentations, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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



Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat (in person)

Friday, Nov. 1, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Nov. 3, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

As Jon Kabat-Zinn writes in *Full Catastrophe Living*, "Life unfolds in moments. The healing power of mindfulness lies in living each one as fully as we can." Mindfulness is the awareness that knows what is happening in the present moment as it is happening. It shapes a wise and compassionate relationship with and response to experience as it unfolds moment by moment. 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." 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. Come cultivate mindfulness in silence through sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and mindful eating with time for instructions, questions and discussion.

Fee: \$255 includes presentations, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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



The Cup of Our Life Retreat (in person)

Saturday, Nov. 9, 9 a.m.–Sunday, Nov. 10, 11 a.m.

Facilitator: Pastor Amy Eisenmann

How do you find your cup of life these days? Empty? Overflowing? Somewhere in between? Cups come in all colors, styles and sizes, and we invite you to bring a favorite cup from home as we learn together and experience what it might be like to take time to refill our own cup of life. Focusing on themes found within Joyce Rupp's book *The Cup of our Life: A Guide for Spiritual Growth* and using a combination of mediums like journaling, labyrinth walking, artistic expression and conversation, our hope is that you will leave this retreat more aware of who you are and how you might find refreshment in your daily journey. Experience a renewed appreciation for the ups and downs of life and head home with tools and tips of renewal to carry on the practice of filling your own cup.

Fee: \$175 includes sessions, Saturday night lodging, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday breakfast

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes sessions and Saturday lunch and dinner



Save the Date!

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship—Winter Table Retreat (in person) with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Nov. 8–9

Winter's Wisdom, Rest & Renewal: A Solstice & Advent Retreat (in person) with Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel, Dec. 13–15

Peaceful Energy for Renewing the Earth (hybrid)

Wednesday, Sept. 18, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Dr. Erin Lothes

Dr. Erin Lothes will highlight the critical importance for transitioning rapidly to renewable, peaceful energy and explore energy justice. She will provide a theological framework for caring for our common home, Earth, with insights and resources from *Laudato Si'* and other aspects of the Christian tradition. Dr. Lothes will share practical ways to engage communities in this great work as they call for change. Erin Lothes, PhD, is a Catholic theologian and author of *Inspired Sustainability: Planting Seeds for Action and The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice: The Loss of Self, The Gift of Self*. This is a program of the Tri-State Network, a coalition of congregations of women religious in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin who focus on peace, justice and spirituality. Join by Zoom or in person, **Fee:** \$10

Echoes of the Equinox Concert (in person)

Saturday, Sept. 21, 7–9 p.m.

Facilitators: Jonny Lipford, Timothy J.P. Gomez, Jon Norris & Laina Pilkenton

Join us for an unforgettable evening! Aligning with the autumn equinox, this concert features the melodious artistry of Timothy J.P. Gomez, Jonny Lipford, Jon Norris and Laina Pilkenton. It promises to transport you through a soundscape of Native American flute, djembe and other healing instruments. Allow the serene harmonies and rhythmic beats to guide you on a journey of relaxation and spiritual rejuvenation, celebrating balance and harmony as day and night become equal. This family-friendly concert will be held outside, weather permitting. Please register by the previous day. **Fee:** \$15 includes one drink ticket, free for kids 12 and under (*Additional wine, beer and non-alcoholic drinks available for \$5.*)

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Information Sessions: Wednesday, Aug. 28, or Tuesday, Sept. 3, 7–8 p.m. (Zoom)

Eight-Week Series: Tuesdays, Sept. 10–Oct. 29, 5:30–8 p.m. (in person)

Retreat Day: Sunday, Oct. 20, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. (in person)

Facilitator: Chris Klug

Mindfulness is the power of mind to be deeply aware of what's happening—without commentary or interference. Research reveals numerous benefits to the nervous system, emotions and general wellbeing. Over eight weeks, this series will cultivate the skill of mindfulness through formal meditation practices and informal integrative practices. It consists of a two-and-a-half-hour class each week over eight weeks with one extended six-and-a-half-hour class. If you want to participate, please attend one of the free information sessions.

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

Day of Self Renewal (in person)

Thursdays, Sept. 5 & Oct. 3; &

Mondays, Sept. 9 & Oct. 14;

8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl meditation, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Services may include massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, qigong, forest therapy, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three service choices are required eight days in advance.

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

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Afternoon Nature & Forest Therapy:

Mondays, Sept. 9 & Oct. 14, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon:

Tuesday, Sept. 17, 6:30–8:30 p.m.; &

Thursday, Oct. 17, 6–8 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." This is a trauma informed practice, and all are welcome. This is not exercise or hiking; it is a slow, sensory walk with the land. Registration is required by the previous day.

Fee: \$15 for afternoon sessions, \$20 for longer evening sessions

Mindfulness at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays, Sept. 9–Oct. 28, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ian Montgomery

Join a weekly gathering of meditators who share the simple goal of sitting together. This is not a class on mindfulness but an open time to sit and meditate in silence together. There is no instruction or formal talk. All disciplines are welcome. We begin with a few words to help us settle and then sit in silence for 30 minutes. Registration is not necessary.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$5

On the Cusp of Change (Zoom)

Tuesdays, Sept. 10 & Oct. 8, 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and better understand our choices in living with change, whether personal or global? This series takes a deeper dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of the present day. Karen leads these online sessions of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus on how to make change more trustworthy. On Sept. 10, we'll talk about claiming companions. On Oct. 8, we'll discuss moving on.

Fee: \$15 per session

Micro-Retreat on Forgiveness (in person)

Wednesday, Sept. 11, 5:30–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Whether you carry little hurts or have experienced significant trauma, forgiveness can be a powerful tool in your healing journey. Interestingly, we often aren't skilled at forgiveness. It's

something we assume we know how to do! Come together to explore the power of forgiveness. While in the community of others, we will learn different tools and practices of forgiveness to take with us on our life journeys.

Fee: \$35 includes dinner

Exploring Spiritual Direction/ Companioning Informational Session (hybrid)

Thursday, Sept. 12, 4:15–5:15 p.m.

Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Spiritual direction/spiritual companionship is a time-honored conversation between two people. Through it, one person consults a spiritually experienced and trained listener about the ways in which the Source of All Being (God, Divine, Love, Universe, Holy, Buddha, Allah ...) may be moving in their life. It crosses all ancient spiritual traditions. Its aim is to empower us to explore a deeper experience of Source of All Being through the experienced and compassionate company of another human. The benefits include articulating experiences of the Divine, exploring spiritual practices and resources, engaging in discernment and exploring spiritual questions. Come learn more about this incredible resource!

Fee: Free

Gathering to Remember (in person)

Tuesday, Sept. 17, 6–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

This service will remember and celebrate your loved ones who have died over the past year. Let's gather to share stories and remember together how important it is to connect with the spiritual energy and legacy of our loved ones. Please join us for this prayerful memorial for family and friends who have transitioned to new life. You are invited to bring a picture or symbol of your loved ones to be used during the service. It will be held around a bonfire outside, weather permitting. Light refreshments will be served. Please register by Sept. 16.

Fee: Free

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

**Wednesdays, Sept. 18 & Oct. 16,
11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.**

Facilitators: Ali Yoka & Derek Doan

Tired of the same old lunch places? Let's renew our bodies and refresh our

spirits in a beautiful setting! Join us for YOLO (*Your Other Lunch Option*)—a lunch choice celebrating wholesome, fresh food made from scratch by our chefs. We dine in a community setting with friends we bring with us or new friends we meet over a delicious themed lunch. Registration is required by the previous Friday.

Fee: \$15 per lunch

Dream Workshop Series (in person)

**Wednesdays; Sept. 18, Sept. 25,
Oct. 2 & Oct. 9; 1–3 p.m.**

Facilitator: Karen Sindelar

Dreams can open us into our inner landscape and help us grow spiritually. Working and playing with dreams can bring transformation and inner healing. This series will expose you to a Jungian approach to deciphering dreams. You will be prepared to work with your dreams individually or in a group and be eligible to join a monthly Dream Group (such as the one that begins Nov. 6).

Fee: \$100 for four-week series

Say Good: An Evening with Ashlee Eiland (Zoom)

Thursday, Oct. 10, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: Ashlee Eiland & Jean Pagliaro

Knowing when to speak truth to those we know and to communities can be difficult. Speaking up can feel intimidating. How do we trust ourselves to know when to say something and how to say it? Join us for a virtual evening with Ashlee Eiland, author of *Say Good: Speaking Across Hot Topics, Complex Relationships, and Tense Situations*. She will teach us about a four-part discernment process that includes having passion, accountability, influence and relationship. The session will include group discussion as well as time for questions. It is a collaboration between Prairiewoods, the Franciscan Spirituality Center and Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center. Please register by Oct. 8.

Fee: \$20

Seasonal Tree Rock Painting (in person)

Saturday, Oct. 19, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

At different times in life and even various times within the same year, we may find ourselves in different seasons of the heart. In this contemplative and creative workshop, we will read passages from John O'Donohue's book *Anam Cara* to help us discern which season of

the heart we are in. Then we will delve into that season and express our emotions through painting on smooth



rocks. We will use a paint brush and fine dotting tools to create a beautiful, one-of-a-kind seasonal tree. This is a fun, relaxing process that can be done by anyone but may be too contemplative for young children. This class is aimed at both those who have painted rock mandalas and those who are totally new to rock painting.

Fee: \$15 includes rocks and art supplies

Living Our Faith at Work & Having Fun Doing It (in person)

Tuesday, Oct. 29, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Facilitator: Tom C. Petersen

Living out our Christian faith in the rough-and-tumble modern workplace can be a challenge. Between bad bosses, conniving coworkers and impossible deadlines, it's easy for the crises of our workday to push our faith to the side. But wouldn't work be better if we could bring our faith to work and apply it throughout the day? This session looks at the role of faith in our work, and the role of work in our faith. We'll talk about how to live a more fully spiritual life at work and how to find the humor and give ourselves grace when we feel like we're falling short. The session includes group discussion, sharing best (and worst) experiences, and resource recommendations for a refreshing new look at work and faith. It will be led by Tom C. Petersen, author of *Thank God it's Monday (?): Balancing Work and Faith While Keeping Your Sense of Humor*.

Fee: \$15 includes lunch

Save the Date!

Holiday Bazaar will be held on **Saturday, Nov. 23!** This festive event will help you jump-start your holiday shopping and get in the spirit of the season! It features hundreds of handcrafted items made by local artists. Visit www.Prairiewoods.org for details.

Ongoing Programs

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (hybrid)
first Wednesdays, Sept. 4 & Oct. 2, 3–4:30 p.m. or
5:15–6:45 p.m.

Gather in community, recognizing that we have the opportunity to co-create the universe and participate in the energy of evolution.

Fee: Free-will offering

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; Sept. 5–Oct. 31; 9:30–10:30 a.m.,
10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga) & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga.

Fee: \$120 for eleven-punch card, \$72 for six-punch card or \$15 for single class

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

Thursdays, Sept. 5 & Oct. 10, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Participate in a gentle, accessible class through meditative, healing energy and compassion-based standing movement, breath work, visualization and acupressure.

Fee: \$12 per session

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursday, Sept. 5, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing, penetrating power of healing sound and vibration via singing bowls and then drop into deepest levels of relaxation and peace through yogic sleep.

Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, Sept. 5–Oct. 31, 4–5 p.m.

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics.

Fee: Free-will offering

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

first & third Thursdays; Sept. 5, Sept. 19, Oct. 3 & Oct. 17;
7–8:30 p.m.

Practice contemplative living to respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections.

Fee: Free-will offering

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony (in person)

Saturdays, Sept. 7 & Oct. 19, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at
2:30, ceremony starts at 4)

Join us for a traditional ceremony focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing in which we sit in a domed lodge around heated stones.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 to Prairiewoods for materials

Drum Circle (in person)

Sunday, Sept. 8, 2–4 p.m.; & Saturday, Oct. 12, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Join Drum Iowa and Prairiewoods for a lively outdoor drum circle (weather permitting). Bring your drums or use ours!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 (but this is a free event for all to enjoy)

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

Mondays, Sept. 9 & Oct. 14, 12:45–1:30 p.m.; & Thursday,
Oct. 3, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine.

Fee: \$10

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, Sept. 10 & Oct. 8 (meeting at Oakland
Road Hy-Vee food court on Oct. 8), 9:30–11:30 a.m.; &
fourth Wednesdays, Sept. 25 & Oct. 23, 6–8 p.m.

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity. All are welcome!

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; Sept. 10, Sept. 24, Oct. 8 &
Oct. 22; 5:30–7 p.m.

Practice a contemplative form of prayer to help deepen your relationship with God or Source of All Being.

Fee: Free-will offering

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

Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults
who support them): second Wednesdays, Sept. 11 & Oct. 9,
 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: third Wednesdays, Sept. 18 & Oct. 16,
 5:30–7 p.m.

Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark with monthly grief support groups open to anyone grieving loss through death.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second & fourth Thursdays; Sept. 12, Sept. 26 & Oct. 24
(not meeting Oct. 10); 4–5:30 p.m.

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes.

Fee: Free-will offering

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays; Sept. 16, Oct. 7 & Oct. 21; 6:30–7:30 p.m.

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

Fee: \$12 per session

Recurring Automatic Donations

We're happy to announce that you can now set up recurring automatic donations to Prairiewoods using either your credit card or an ACH transfer through your bank. Simply visit our website by scanning the QR code or visiting www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate. Then choose either credit card or ACH transfer and select a frequency that works best for you.



Amazon Wish List

If you're looking to support Prairiewoods in a different way, we recently created a short wish list on Amazon. We'd love your help in securing these items to help make our guests' stays more comfortable. Scan the QR code or visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate for an up-to-date wish list with links. Thanks so much for your continued support!

Learn about Spiritual Direction

Prairiewoods has four spiritual directors on staff who offer one-on-one spiritual direction. Spiritual direction has been part of Christian and non-Christian traditions from their very beginnings. It provides people with companionship on a spiritual journey. Spiritual direction might be ideal for you if you want to:

- find wholeness and balance in life and connect with God, Allah, Tao, Universe or however you may refer to the Source of All Being
- sense the integration of that Spirit within your daily life
- explore our true nature as human beings

Typically, spiritual direction sessions are one hour long and occur monthly and/or during a directed retreat of any length.

A spiritual director or companion is a trained listener and questioner, a guide for your soul. Topics for discussion and discernment are determined by you, the directee. A director does not give you answers or steer you in any one direction. Rather, a spiritual director asks questions that help you focus on the sense of direction that is already inside you. Together, you listen to how God or the Source of All Being is at work in your life.

As a directee, you may choose to reflect on:

- events from your past
- life in the moment
- your vision for the future
- your desires, hopes and dreams
- your longing to grow spiritually

In choosing to participate in spiritual direction, you may begin to gain clarity and contentment with the direction of your life.

The first session is without cost or obligation. Future appointments cost \$50–\$60 per hour, though no one is turned away because of inability to pay. To begin meeting with any spiritual director, contact Ann Jackson, PBVM, at 319-395-6700, ext. 203, or ajackson@prairiewoods.org or contact the spiritual director with whom you would like to meet.

Meet the Prairiewoods Spiritual Directors

Joann Gehling, FSPA, is one of Prairiewoods' foundresses and has been on staff since it opened in 1996. She is available for spiritual direction, counseling, hosting retreats and healing touch spiritual ministry. Sister Joann has a doctorate in ministry with a concentration in feminist theology and psychology. Joann can be reached at jgehling@prairiewoods.org or 319-395-6700, ext. 204.

Ann Jackson, PBVM, is Prairiewoods' coordinator of spiritual services. Blending love of nature, literature, leadership and spirituality, Sister Ann delights in listening with others to the energy of Spirit stirring creativity, passion, discernment and service. She enjoys offering spiritual direction and facilitation to individuals and groups. Ann can be reached at ajackson@prairiewoods.org or 319-395-6700, ext. 203.

Leslie Schwarting serves as a full-time spiritual director and retreat facilitator. A wife, mother of three adult women and former hospital executive, Leslie completed her spiritual direction certification to tend to the souls of others on this journey of life. Leslie has extensive experience in leading large teams, developing organizational engagement strategies, improving processes and connecting deeply to those around her. She loves to create space for her directees and support them as they explore what their hearts crave, identify where opportunities for healing are, contemplate the rich questions of our lives, and grow closer to God, the Earth, oneself and others. Leslie can be reached at lschwarting@prairiewoods.org or 319-395-6700, ext. 215.

Lucille Winnike, FSPA, ministers as a retreat director and spiritual director. Earlier ministries include teaching and administration in Catholic schools, as well as administration within her community. Sister Lucille has a master's degree in mathematics from Notre Dame University, where she later did further studies in spirituality and interned as a spiritual director. She says, "Many persons who come here experience the richness and healing powers of Prairiewoods itself, of Mother Earth, of God. It is my privilege to meet with some of those people." Lucille can be reached at lwinnike@prairiewoods.org or 319-395-6700, ext. 221.



We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list of donors and volunteers, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate.



Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center
120 E Boyson Rd
Hiawatha IA 52233

Help Us Update Our Records

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

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

Are you on social media? Find "Prairiewoods FSC" on:



Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, Sept. 29, 1–3 p.m.

Join us for outdoor fun for people and pets! Gather your family, your friends and your favorite animal companions and head to the annual Blessing of the Animals at Prairiewoods! Please bring your pets on leashes or in carriers, their clean-up bags, and lawn chairs or blankets. We'll have this free event rain or shine, and it will be moved indoors if there's inclement weather.

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

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



November/December 2024

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Revisiting a Sense of **ONENESS**

It is early September 2024. My windows are open, and the symphony of the woods is lilting through the screen. The crickets provide an anchoring hum, birdsong provides a melody, and the gentle, rhythmic movement of the leaves adds percussion to this morning's serenade. The early sun is resting on the trees, coaxing the woods awake. The deep feeling that all is right with the world is palpable here in the refuge that is Prairiewoods.

The truth is that the presidential elections are days away, wars are raging, and people right here in Hiawatha, Iowa, are facing food insecurity. Simply put, division is rampant.

At its roots, Prairiewoods works to educate, inspire and embody ecological spirituality. Nurturing a sense of oneness is a key underpinning of ecological spirituality. For some of you, this concept resonates deeply in your bone marrow. You have a core understanding that we are spiritual beings connected to the Source of all Being, one another and Earth. You have lived experience that has demonstrated that we are one with a Higher Power and the creation by which we are surrounded. For others, this statement may feel foreign as you observe conflict on the world stage or experience discord with others or within.

For years, while I marveled at the beauty of Earth and knew of God's deep love for and presence within me, I didn't give the concept of oneness much thought. I was busy being busy. I put on my high heels and pencil skirt and went to work in a hospital. The idea of being intrinsically connected to others, God or nature was not part of my daily awareness. As I reflect, I try not to think about everything I missed in my first 50 years!

(continued on page 3)

Grandmother Oak
by Emily Osweiler

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Coordinator

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Cook

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Director

Ali Yoka
Chef & Kitchen Manager




We recently held a work session with staff and board members to identify Prairie Woods' evolutionary priorities for the next several years. We had powerful conversations about many things. Strong themes emerged that I believe Prairie Woods is uniquely poised to address. Some of these themes I have talked about before, such as how science is underscoring the importance of a healthy spiritual life and connections to nature as contributors to the wellbeing of people. But more important to me than the science are the benefits of healthy spirituality. No surprise to any of you they include a sense of peace, love, inspiration, purpose, and improved mental health and resilience. Our spiritual life also impacts how we engage with community in very positive ways.

The Fetzer Institute's research suggests that 49% of people aspire to be more spiritual. And the Gallup Faith and Wellness research finds that 85% of adults connect with a Higher Power. At the same time, a growing percentage of adults identify as spiritual and not religious. The New York Times reports the "dechurching" of America is one of the largest and fastest growing cultural shifts. A 2023 Prairie Woods survey found that over 20% of respondents are spiritual and not religious and over 40% are not engaged in a faith community. Yet research indicates that humans miss the membership and participation that denominations have offered, needing a sense of "belonging, becoming and beyond" (Sacred Design Lab) and inter-spiritual spaces not embedded in a particular tradition (Fetzer). We hunger for connection, shared experience and unity.

So it is clear that the world is calling us to cast a wider net and help people we know and love—and people we haven't yet met—nurture a healthy spirituality. So now we are asking ourselves what resources are needed to be a safe and healing space and to be able to offer the radical hospitality needed at this time. We will need to be spiritual innovators, all the while leaning on the wisdom of peoples and traditions that formed our foundations. And we cannot forget how this land we are upon is an essential partner in what is offered here.

I hope you will continue to help us co-create the future of Prairie Woods. Your energy and light inspire us every day.

Peace and all good,


Leslie A. Wright



Prairie Woods is an 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: Prairie Woods 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 Prairie Woods 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 Prairie Woods perspective.

Please address all correspondence to:

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(continued from page 1)

Oneness is alive and well within me now and in the global world. At Prairiewoods, this awareness fuels our mission to support and cultivate holistic wellbeing for all.

In his book *Ecological Spirituality*, Diarmuid O'Murchu writes, "Oneness with God is not a thread between God and us but more like an inclusive space gathering all creation. Total and perfect inclusion is what Love is."

Thomas Keating writes, "We come across Oneness in infinite ways. This is because God is always happening. In the divine Oneness, there is no other."

Within the Christian tradition, Jesus' beautiful imagery crystallizes the concept of Oneness: "I am the Vine, and you are the branches. Abide in me as I in you" (John 15: 4-5). As individuals, organizations, communities, animals and Earth, we are the branches tied back to the Source of All Being in the Vine. We are one active living organism— together.

So why does this matter? Why does understanding our interconnectedness make any difference? Imagine how active attention to and integration of this deep knowledge would change our world. Decisions would be approached differently, resources would be used more consciously and the simple acknowledgment of our shared humanity would lead us to a world where we respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively. Consciousness would be elevated.

Contemplating what might be different naturally leads to the question: *How can we activate Oneness in our lives?* It takes nothing more than an open heart and a mindful awareness of what is in your field of vision, both practically and spiritually. One can let the experience unfold by getting still, listening to your inner awareness or simply gazing at the sky. If you desire more formal practices, I invite you to try centering prayer, spiritual direction, meditation and mindfulness experiences at Prairiewoods.

Author Paul Smith writes, "There are many different degrees of intensity, concentration, and conviction in the Oneness experiences of different individuals. Like all divine-human creation, it emerges as a co-creation molded by both God and our consciousness. Don't expect or try for your experience to be just like another's. The most striking effect of the experience of Oneness is not new fact-knowledge or concepts. Instead, it is a new-found spiritual energy, a greater spiritual vision. We are raised to a whole new level of life."

As the Prairiewoods symphony continues to waft through my window, the words of Black Elk, an Oglala Lakota tribal leader, come to mind: "Peace will come to the heart of humanity when they realize their Oneness with the Universe. It is everywhere."

—Leslie Schwarting

the woods at sunrise
by Emily Osweiler

How Are You Awakening to Oneness?

“Oneness is very simple: everything is included and allowed to live according to its true nature. This is the secret that is being revealed, the opportunity that is offered. How we make use of this opportunity depends upon the degree of our participation, how much we are prepared to give ourselves to the work that needs to be done, to the freedom that needs to be lived.”

—Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Sufi Mystic,
Working with Oneness

As we listen to retreatants and guests of Prairiewoods, we celebrate the many and varied ways people are collectively awakening a spirit of oneness today. Here are just a few ways our guests find oneness on these sacred grounds:

Practicing deeper listening without an agenda in conversations to address separation and isolation

Engaging in group gardening to foster a sense of shared responsibility for food deserts in our community

Becoming grounded in your environment by taking a bio-region quiz to grow your relationship with the region to which you belong

Mindfully consuming to live more sustainably on Earth

Praying and meditating with others for war-torn, global areas in need of loving energy

Share the Gift of Prairiewoods with a Loved One


If you're looking for the ideal gift this holiday season, consider buying a gift certificate for your favorite Prairiewoods experiences! Gift certificates can be used for:

- programs or retreats (such as qigong, singing bowls, mandala painting or any retreat)

- holistic services (including massage, healing touch, reflexology and spiritual direction)
- Gift Shop purchases

Contact Prairiewoods at 319-395-6700 or ecospirit@prairiewoods.org to buy a gift certificate for any dollar amount.





Meditating on Audrey Marcus's quote: "You are comprised of: 84 minerals, 23 elements, and 8 gallons of water spread across 38 trillion cells. You have been built up from nothing by the spare parts of the Earth you have consumed, according to a set of instructions hidden in a double helix and small enough to be carried by a sperm. You are recycled butterflies, plants, rocks, streams, firewood, wolf fur, and shark teeth, broken down to their smallest parts and rebuilt into our planet's most complex living thing. You are not living on Earth. You are Earth."

Celebrating diversity of relationships as we intentionally meet with and learn with and from people who don't look like us

Reflecting to become more aware of how the Source of All Being reveals itself through many people, circumstances and nature

Taking time to sense the pulse and place of Earth, realizing that everything breathes

Participating in Terra Divina—a spiritual practice of engaging with Earth—on Sunday afternoons (see p. 8 for details)

As Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee says, oneness is "the work that needs to be done ... the freedom that needs to be lived." Do you recall when you first awakened to oneness?

Share the Gift of Prairiewoods with a Stranger

In the spirit of St. Francis, we honor each person's journey as they nurture their relationships with the Source of All Being, Earth, self and others. We understand that, while many of our programs are free or have a small suggested donation, some require a larger investment. We will not turn anyone away because of inability to pay.

If you would like to help others attend a program or retreat or take part in a service like spiritual direction, please consider adding a donation to your registration fee or contact us. And if you need financial assistance to attend a program or service, please contact us at 319-395-6700 or ecospirit@prairiewoods.org.

For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat (in person)

Friday, Nov. 1, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Nov. 3, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

As Jon Kabat-Zinn writes in *Full Catastrophe Living*, “Life unfolds in moments. The healing power of mindfulness lies in living each one as fully as we can.” Mindfulness is the awareness that knows what is happening in the present moment as it is happening. It shapes a wise and compassionate relationship with and response to experience as

it unfolds moment by moment. 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.” 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 wellbeing and happiness. Come cultivate mindfulness in silence through sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and mindful eating with time for instructions, questions and discussion.

Fee: \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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



The Cup of Our Life Retreat (in person)

Saturday, Nov. 9, 9 a.m.–Sunday, Nov. 10, 11 a.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

How do you find your cup of life these days? Empty? Overflowing? Somewhere in between? Cups come in all colors, styles and sizes, and we invite you to bring a favorite cup from home as we learn together and experience what it might be like to take time to refill our own cup of life. Focusing on themes found

within Joyce Rupp’s book *The Cup of our Life: A Guide for Spiritual Growth* and using a combination of mediums like journaling, labyrinth walking, artistic expression and conversation, our



hope is that you will leave this retreat more aware of who you are and how you might find refreshment in your daily journey. Experience a renewed appreciation for the ups and downs of life and head home with tools and tips of renewal to carry on the practice of filling your own cup.

Fee: \$175 includes sessions, Saturday night lodging, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday breakfast

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes sessions and Saturday lunch and dinner

Winter’s Wisdom, Rest & Renewal: A Solstice & Advent Retreat (in person)

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

Facilitator: 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 “letting be” amid the darkness so we can open to mysterious healing forces working with and in us to birth life anew. Come for a weekend of cultivating Night Vision and awareness of Light in everything—even in darkness, in

wintery seasons of our lives and in our very being. This retreat includes ways of transforming our relationship with uncertainty or fear, and for experiencing mystical union with The Sacred amid silence, The Dark Night, all of Creation, and in our bodies, minds and souls. We will experience this increased awareness of Oneness and peace via inter-spiritual mystical wisdom, rest and mind-body-spirit practices. It includes 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 integrates soothing night prayers, insights from Advent and Celtic Christian spiritual ways of being, Buddhism, Taoism and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Spiritual practices include slow, meditative energy and compassion-based Qigong movement and acupressure, yogic sleep (yoga nidra), and vibrational singing bowl sound healing for rebalancing mind, body and spirit.

Fee: \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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



Our Guests Say It Best!

Here are a few comments from recent Prairiewoods guests:

“The intentional slowing down created the space for my heart to listen to Spirit and to open itself to trust and hope instead of fear and worry.”

—Carla S., Silent Directed Retreat participant

“Thanks so much ... for helping to make our Young Adult Evening of Prayer such a positive experience. We all enjoyed and appreciated the warm hospitality, delicious meal, and beautiful, comfortable environment for our event. (We) were also pleased to introduce Prairiewoods to some of our young adults so they might take advantage of your place in the future.”

—Bob G., hosted group facilitator

Living with Intention Retreat (in person)
Friday, Jan. 3, 6 p.m.–Sunday, Jan. 5, 1 p.m. (Choose the length of retreat that works best for you!)

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Oscar Wilde wrote, “To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.” How are you showing up in this life? Are you existing, or are you really living? Join us as your schedule allows, as a commuter or with one or two overnight stays. We will discuss living with intention on Friday evening and participate in a mindfulness group practice. After breakfast on Saturday, a body movement activity will lead us into a short exploration of our mindset and heart’s calling in the new year. Rest and quiet will be plentiful on Saturday afternoon, with an optional centering prayer activity. On Saturday evening, we will walk the indoor labyrinth while contemplating our intentions for 2025. Sunday morning will greet us with a beading practice in which we will create an intention catcher as a keepsake of our intentions for the year ahead. We intend for this retreat to give you dedicated time to prepare for and enter into 2025 with clarity and peace.



Friday–Sunday Fee: \$265 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

Friday–Sunday Commuter Fee: \$195 includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch

Friday–Saturday Fee: \$225 includes Friday and Saturday sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Friday–Saturday Commuter Fee: \$175 includes Friday and Saturday sessions and Saturday lunch

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship Retreat (in person)

Friday, Jan. 24, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Jan. 26, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Explore an innovative approach to deepening your relationship with food, your connection with the land, and co-creating a learning community to promote health and wellbeing for all!

Michael Pollan asks, “What would happen ... if we were to start thinking about food as less of a thing and more of a relationship?” Peace with food will be the center of our table. Join a learning community to deepen your connection to food and to the land through your food choices. We’ll

engage the Wheel of Food Peace Transformation, a creative approach developed to foster new ways of relating to food and land. Drawing from meditative practices, spiritual and ecological resources, physiology, and nutrition, we’ll consider how the food we choose to eat connects us to all life forms. Retreatants will create a personal Food Peace action plan to cultivate peace for self, others and all of creation. If you choose, we will reconvene at seasonal tables in 2025 to learn to access a variety of foods, noting how our choices reconnect and ground us to others and to the land.



Continue the Pathways to Peace: Food as Relationship journey throughout 2025 in spring (March 21–22), summer (June 27–28), fall (Sept. 6–7) and winter (Dec. 13–14).

Fee: \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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

Pause. Rest. Be. Mid-Winter Silent Directed Retreat (in person)

Friday, Jan. 31, 5 p.m.–Sunday, Feb. 2, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Ann Jackson, PBVM

Winter offers a grand invitation to pause, rest and be with all that’s stirring within us. Pausing to sense stillness and silence often surfaces the wisdom of the body. We will gather a few times to listen to the wisdom of silence together and to learn mindful embodiment practices to incorporate into our daily rhythms. Between those few brief group opportunities and some wholesome meals will be time for us to individually practice pausing, resting and being. You may choose to participate in one or two sessions of spiritual direction and can also receive massage, healing touch or reflexology. The content of this retreat is inspired by Octavia F. Raheem’s brilliant offering *Pause Rest Be: Stillness Practices for Courage in Times of Change*.



Fee: \$255 includes mindfulness meditation sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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

January–June 2025 Retreat Brochure Available!

To help you prepare for the year ahead, Prairiewoods has created a six-month Retreat Brochure with details on retreats we will host January–June 2025. To download a printable copy, visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats. If you would like us to mail you a copy, please send your address to alewis@prairiewoods.org.

Save the Date!

Earth, Body, Mind & Spirit Retreat (in person) with Shawn Westbrook, Feb. 15–16

Awakening Awareness of Energy Retreat (in person) with Tammy Bayer & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Feb. 21–23

Japanese Art of Kintsugi: Embracing Our Imperfections with Grace & Courage Retreat (in person) with Jean Pagliaro & Julie Connelly, Feb. 28–March 1

Terra Divina: A Spiritual Practice of Engaging with Earth (in person)

Sundays, Nov. 10 & Dec. 8,
3–4:15 p.m.

Facilitator: Stephanie Heifner

Join us for a monthly gathering to practice terra divina and tune into the seasons playing out on the landscape. Like lectio divina is a sacred reading of the text, terra divina is a sacred reading of the earth—the “Book of Creation.” With an attitude of wonder and with all of our senses, we’ll engage in conversation with nature. The gathering begins with a brief conversation, sharing in learning about the season we are in now. We’ll learn the steps of terra divina and then wander independently as we practice for about 40 minutes. We will conclude by gathering again as a group, sharing bread and herbal tea, and conversing about our experiences.

Fee: \$15

African Prayer Beads Workshop (in person)

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Helen Armstrong,
Director of African Ministry at St.
Mark’s United Methodist Church

Gather together to learn the history of prayer beads that are an important part of African cultures.

These beads are often used to count blessings and give thanks for individual graces, such as the animals and plants of Earth. We’ll hear from participants in African Women Empowered (AWE), a local nonprofit ministry that provides skills training for African women, about their experiences and their move to eastern Iowa. Enjoy this opportunity to help support their mission and also make your own set of prayer beads to take home with you!

Fee: \$40 includes all art supplies, including beads from Africa



Pathways of Peace: Labyrinth Walk (in person)

Sunday, Nov. 3, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Wright

All are welcome to walk our indoor labyrinth. We will be walking the labyrinth for peace and wisdom for ourselves, our loved ones, and our community, nation and world. We will provide some brief guidance for those who may be new to this spiritual practice or have been away from it for a while. The labyrinth can be a metaphor for how we walk through life and the situations that are currently confronting us. All are welcome and no experience is required.

Fee: Free-will offering

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays; Nov. 4, Nov. 18, Dec. 2 &
Dec. 16; 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 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. Registration is required.

Fee: \$12 per session

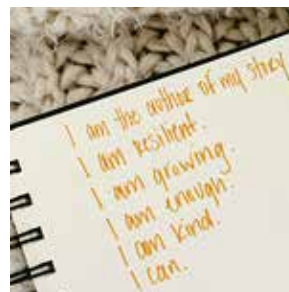
Dream Group (in person)

Wednesdays, beginning Nov. 6,
1–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Sindelar, MA, LMT

“Dreams come in the service of wholeness and health,” writes 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 seven-month series (Nov. 6, Dec. 4, Jan. 8, Feb. 5, March 5, April 2 and May 7), you will be exposed to a Jungian approach to deciphering your dreams. As a prerequisite, you must have some dream workshop experience (at Prairiewoods or elsewhere) that has introduced you to working with dreams individually or in a group.

Fee: \$175 for the seven-month series, whether present or not



Day of Self Renewal (in person)

Thursdays, Nov. 7 & Dec. 5; &

Mondays, Nov. 11 & Dec. 9;

8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

See p. 11 for details.

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1:45–2:30 p.m.;

& Mondays, Nov. 11 & Dec. 9,

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 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.

Registration is required by noon.

Fee: \$10

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience (in person)

Mondays, Nov. 11 & Dec. 9,

2:30–3:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Emelia Sautter

Join 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, this is “a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land.” This is a trauma informed practice, and all are welcome. This is not exercise or hiking; it is a slow, sensory walk with the land. Registration is required by the previous day.

Fee: \$15

Micro-Retreat: You are Enough! Conversation & Practices to Quiet Mind Chatter (in person)

Tuesday, Nov. 12, 5:30–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Do you remember the song “This One’s for the Girls” by Martina McBride? If not, we encourage you to look it up! Whether you are in high school, in mid-life or an ageless goddess, many

of us have experienced self-doubt at one time or another. Come for dinner and an evening of honest conversation and play. We will explore practices to calm the negative chatter in our minds, reduce anxiety and connect to the Oneness of Spirit that lives and breathes through us daily. Make plans, call your friends and come for an evening of restoration. This event is open to those 16 and older.
Fee: \$35 includes dinner

On the Cusp of Change (Zoom)
Tuesdays, Nov. 19 & Dec. 10,
7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and better understand our choices in living with change, whether personal or global? Take a deep dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of the present day. Karen leads an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus on how to make change more trustworthy. On Nov. 19, we'll talk about imagining a way, and on Dec. 10 we'll widen what we trust.
Fee: \$15 per session

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option)
(in person)
Wednesdays, Nov. 13 & Dec. 11,
11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Ali Yoka, Derek Doan & Brenda Horn

Tired of the same old lunch places? Let's renew our bodies and refresh our spirits in a beautiful setting!



Join us for YOLO (*Your Other Lunch Option*)—a lunch choice celebrating wholesome, fresh food made from scratch by our chefs. We dine in a community setting with friends we bring with us or new friends we meet over a delicious themed lunch. Check our website for monthly themes. Feel free to arrive at 11:30, and the buffet line

opens at noon. Registration is required by the previous Friday.
Fee: \$15 per lunch

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Groups (in person)
Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them): Wednesdays, Nov. 13 & Dec. 11, 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: Wednesdays, Nov. 20 & Dec. 18, 5:30–7 p.m.
Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW

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. These monthly grief groups are open to anyone grieving loss through death. In November, we'll experiment with paper bead making, choosing patterns and colors that speak to us to create a finished project, like a bracelet, with personalized beads. In December, we'll create snow globes that can be personalized with photos or items that remind us of our love one. Registration is required one week in advance.
Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the family group)

Drum Circle (in person)
Sunday, Nov. 17, 2–4 p.m.; &
Saturday, Dec. 7, 6–8 p.m.
Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Join Drum Iowa and Prairiewoods for a lively drum circle. Don't forget your drums! (We also will have instruments for you to borrow.) You don't need to be a magnificent drummer or musician to enjoy this fun time. Spectators are welcome, and we'll have you drumming in no time! Registration is not necessary.
Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 (but this is free for all to enjoy)



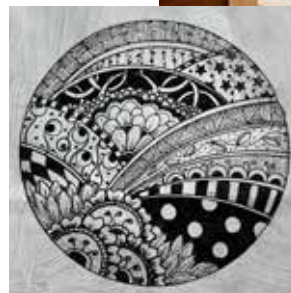
Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods (in person)
Thursday, Nov. 21, 4–8 p.m.
Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Join us for an Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods. Modeled after Europe's wildly popular Offline Club, we invite you to leave your devices behind and swap screen time for real-time connection with others. Dinner will be available for purchase, and this will be an unstructured time for you to unwind, meet like-minded people, catch up on hobbies like knitting or needlework, and be in community with others. Games, books, mandala coloring and other fun things to do together will be available. Or you can bring a book and simply be in the presence of others! Feel free to invite others for a new experience of connecting together without your devices. This event will be held on the third Thursday of each month. Feel free to come and go as you please, as there will not be a formal program.
Fee: \$5 (*À la carte dinner and snack options will be available for purchase.*)

Create Your Own Peaceful Patterns Gift Bag (in person)
Saturday, Dec. 7, 2–4 p.m.
Facilitator: Andi Lewis



Take a break from your busy holiday schedule to create a meaningful, one-of-a-kind gift bag to give to someone special! We will



learn about Peaceful Patterns, often called doodles or tangles, which are detailed black-and-white drawings created by repeating simple patterns. Then we'll use fine artist's pens to draw our

very own Peaceful Patterns on a paper gift bag that will add a personal touch to any holiday gift. This will be a fun, creative workshop, so bring your best friend or family to create together! No experience or artistic skill is necessary.
Fee: \$15 includes all art supplies

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

Thursday, Dec. 5, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Based on age-old Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), this gentle and accessible class involves meditative, healing energy and compassion-based standing movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice. We open, rebalance and cultivate Qi (universal life force energy-Spirit) throughout the body's energy pathways, centers and organs to assist with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. We send healing intention to others and the planet.

Fee: \$12



Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursday, Dec. 5, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing, penetrating power of healing sound and vibration via singing bowls. Then drop into deepest levels of relaxation and peace through authentic, age-old yogic sleep (yoga nidra)—a reclined, meditative experience used by stress reduction clinics, integrative health care and mystics who savor resting in blissful Oneness with The Sacred. We close with prayerful sound healing, including a lower-octave bowl played on or near (your choice) the shrine of your heart.

Fee: \$10



Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; Nov. 4–25 & Dec. 2–19; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga) & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment of Prairiewoods.

Fee: \$120 for eleven-punch card, \$72 for six-punch card or \$15 for single class

Mindfulness at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays, Nov. 4–Dec. 23, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ian Montgomery

Join a weekly gathering of meditators who share the simple goal of sitting together to meditate in silence.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$5

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (hybrid)

first Wednesdays, Nov. 6 & Dec. 4, 3–4:30 p.m. or 5:15–6:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

Gather in community, recognizing that we have the opportunity to co-create the universe and participate in the energy of evolution.

Fee: Free-will offering

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, Nov. 7–21 & Dec. 5–19, 4–5 p.m.

Facilitator: Ellen Bruckner

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics.

Fee: Free-will offering

Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

first & third Thursdays; Nov. 7, Nov. 21, Dec. 5 & Dec. 19; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz

Slowly explore *New Seeds of Contemplation*,



a beloved book by Thomas Merton, one of the great spiritual leaders of our time.

Fee: Free-will offering

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, Nov. 12 & Dec. 10, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity. All are welcome! (The Wednesday evening group will not meet in November and December because of the holidays.)

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; Nov. 12, Nov. 26 & Dec. 10; 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith

Practice a contemplative form of prayer to help deepen your relationship with God or Source of All Being.

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second Thursdays, Nov. 14 & Dec. 12, 4–5:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linzy Martin

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes. (The group will not meet on the fourth Thursdays in November and December because of the holidays.)

Fee: Free-will offering

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony (in person)

Saturdays, Nov. 16 & Dec. 14, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2:30, ceremony starts at 4)

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

Join us for a traditional ceremony focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing in which we sit in a lodge around heated stones.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 to Prairiewoods for materials

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list of donors and volunteers, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate.

Welcome Julio Vera, our new massage therapist!

Julio Vera graduated from Carlson College of Massage Therapy in 2024.

He specializes in therapeutic, deep tissue, muscle tension and relaxation massage.

Born in Mexico, Julio is bilingual in English and Spanish. He recently moved to Iowa from New York City with his

family who is local to the area. Julio is also a dance fitness instructor with a passion for helping others achieve their goals.

*\$45 for 30 minutes
\$65 for 60 minutes
\$90 for 90 minutes*

Scan the QR code to schedule with Julio!



¡Bienvenido Julio Vera, nuestro nuevo masajista!



Julio Vera se graduó de Carlson College of Massage Therapy en 2024. Se

especializa en masajes terapéuticos, de tejido profundo, tensiones musculares y relajación.

Nacido en México, Julio es bilingüe en inglés y español. Recientemente se mudó a Iowa desde la ciudad de Nueva

York con su familia que vive en el área. Julio también es un instructor de baile y una pasión por ayudar a otros a lograr sus objetivos.

*\$45 por 30 minutos
\$65 por 60 minutos
\$90 por 90 minutos*

¡Escanea el código QR para agendar con Julio!

Join Us for Our Popular Day of Self Renewal

Could you use a day away from your usual routine? Have you experienced a big change in your life and need some time to reflect on what's next? Do you know someone who is always caring for others and could use a day of being cared for themselves? A Day of Self Renewal may be just the thing!

You choose how your body, mind and spirit are nurtured that day. Gentle, compassionate, experienced practitioners guide you through two sessions of your choice:

- yoga or chair yoga
- qigong
- nature & forest therapy
- massage or head & shoulder massage
- healing touch
- reflexology
- spiritual direction



With plenty of unscheduled time and (if you choose) a room of your own, you can walk our 72 acres, rest under Grandmother Oak, walk the labyrinth as a meditative practice, or spend time in the Art Room drawing, painting or creating a collage. In the middle of the day, lunch is served—no preparation, no clean-up! Then you are welcome to participate in Sound Bath or Singing Bowl Meditation.

This tranquil day is offered on the first Thursday and second Monday of each month from 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. The cost is \$110 and includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowls, a private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room). For more information or to register, contact us at www.Prairiewoods.org or 319-395-6700.



Prairie Woods Franciscan Spirituality Center
120 E Boyson Rd
Hiawatha IA 52233

Help Us Update Our Records

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

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

Are you on social media? Find "Prairie Woods FSC" on:



Prairie Woods Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 23, 8 a.m.–noon

Join us for our annual Holiday Bazaar, where you'll find many wonderful items for your holiday gift shopping list! We'll also have coffee, warm apple cider and sweet treats available to purchase, so grab your friends and family and get into the spirit of the season!

The Holiday Bazaar features more than a dozen local artists with handcrafted items including:

- one-of-a-kind jewelry, wood crafts and pottery
- handmade soaps and lotions
- hand-knit hats, mittens, blankets and other goods
- pies, cookies and other baked items
- holiday wreaths
- fabric bags, aprons and skirts from African Women Empowered

In addition, Prairie Woods will be selling:

- gift shop items, such as wind chimes, Prairie Woods T-shirts, and books on ecology and spirituality
- fresh-cut greenery bundles or swags from the Prairie Woods' grounds
- monastery candy from the Trappist Nuns of the Mississippi Abbey
- gift certificates for any dollar amount

Don't miss this chance to shop handcrafted goods from local artists and enjoy the holiday season!