

Prairiewoods

January/February 2025

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

The Wisdom of Many



An essential principle of ecological spirituality is *multi-disciplinary wisdom*. It is a phrase that sounds academic and not particularly spiritual. Other words we might use for the same idea are *interconnection* and *interdependence*. *It means that the path to flourishing for people and the planet has been named by many voices over thousands of years.* It is not just the product of many scientific disciplines but also many traditions and many generations. It means that everything is our teacher—our elders past and present, plants and animals, and each other.

We have entered a time when we are uncovering the many intersections of wisdom we may have thought were mutually exclusive and impermeable. Each new connection contributes to an ongoing evolutionary becoming—in our physical world but also in our consciousness. And contrary to what you may have been taught, new knowledge does not necessarily make older knowledge irrelevant, instead reinforcing and reaffirming ancient wisdom. I experience this as a beautiful kaleidoscope of perspectives that enliven our understanding of creation, ourselves and Creator.

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I write to you shortly after we have turned our clocks back and the daylight hours are becoming ever shorter. This can be a challenging time for me as daylight shrinks. But I also know that every day brings me closer to the winter solstice, and then each day becomes a journey towards more light. I love that day! And some of my most mystical experiences have involved light in the darkness—a sliver of moon in a darkened sky, a candle shining valiantly in a darkened sanctuary, the white lights on the Christmas tree in my living room when all other lights have been extinguished.

Prairiewoods has taught me to find the light and the promise in this season. Though on the surface it may appear lifeless, dark and bare, now I know that it is an important time of rest and preparation for new life. The joyous burst of spring green is not possible without this transition time. I find beauty in the shape of the tree against the gray winter sky, in the unexpected passage of a deer and in the frosty breath of wind in the woods and prairie.

I must also awaken to the necessity and the hidden potential in the transitions happening personally and communally. These times are dark and full of grief, but I know if I get quiet, rest and listen, I will see the light calling me into the next season. With each step it will grow brighter.

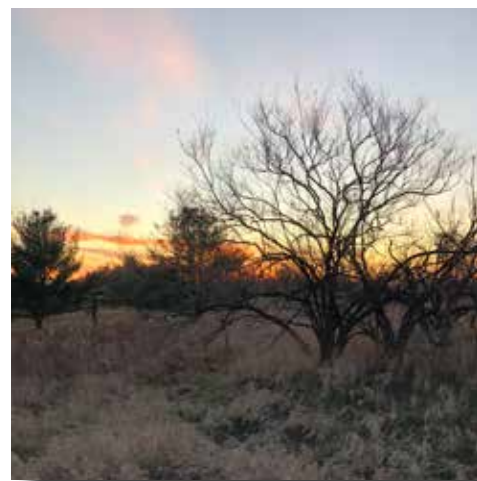
A Hebrew-English Bible translates Proverbs 20:27 as “the human spirit is the lamp of God.” It is at times like these that I must carry my hope like a lamp. Rebecca Solnit says, “Hope locates itself in the premise that we don’t know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act” (*Grounds for Hope*, p. xiv).

So I ask myself (and all of us) what is that spaciousness offering us? We are with God, weaving the fabric of the future in every moment.

What bright color of hope and anticipation shall we add? How shall we cultivate the light in ourselves and others? I am reminded of the Carthage College Christmas concert I attended several years ago. At the end as we sang a final hymn together, voices raised in the darkness of the sanctuary, one by one we passed the light with our candles. A light that began as one small flame became a holy glow, enough to see our way and each other's illumined faces.

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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A multi-disciplinary approach is the natural response to our growing awareness of our interconnected and increasingly complex world. This approach sets the stage for creativity and adaptability. It invites us to collaborate just like healthy natural systems.

What have we learned?

Silos, fragmentation and disconnection are not desirable and often harmful. When we view the world in discrete categories, we miss the beauty and the interactions of the whole and we often miss important insights. When we view our world in a binary way and spend our time looking for the one right answer, we often miss important truths. This requires us to unlearn the lessons of the old scientific method that suggests that all of life can be disassembled into individual and self-sufficient parts. It forces us to let go of this notion of the self-sufficient, independent and individual life and lean into the beautiful complexities of relationship. The research of people like Suzanne Simard and Robin Wall Kimmerer have shown us the power of networked living systems that thrive on mutuality and reciprocity. They invite us to reconsider how we might live.

How shall we cultivate healthy systems that are reciprocal and not transactional?

Let us include and transcend as we savor the reemergence and affirmation of ages-old wisdom, particularly about our relationship to all of creation. As we awaken our understanding of kinship versus dominion—our concern and respect for all creation grows. It reveals unexpected paths forward to address the challenges of our time such as the climate crisis, isolation and polarization.

Nurturing our spiritual lives must be a priority. We have believed this, but now research affirms that there are many dimensions to human thriving, and one of them is spirituality. The work of Dr. Lisa Miller (see p. 5) and others has shown us what we have long intuited—a healthy spirit is essential to a healthy life. And in fact, a healthy spiritual life provides powerful protective factors against despair. The practices and community that are part of an intentional spiritual life can help us be more resilient, compassionate and hopeful in a challenging world.

The circles of wisdom close as we learn anew how nature heals us. Forest bathing and time in green spaces have measurable physical effects. Awe is an antidote to despair. Time in nature offers us the opportunity to connect with the ingredients that create the experience of awe and

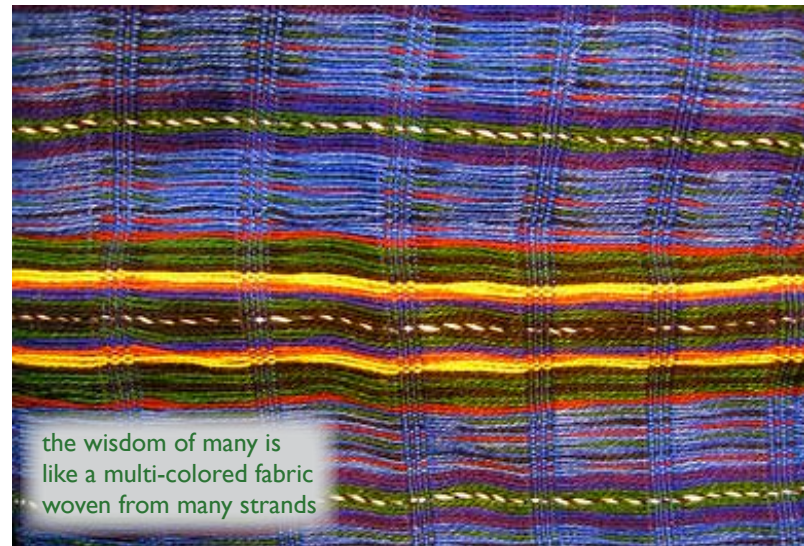
wonder—vastness and mystery.

“Open our eyes of wonder.” — Yuria Celidwen

Mystery is good. Let us recognize the limits of our human understanding and rational knowing. Let us use our curiosity to examine and reweave our stories about meaning, the nature of reality and our place in it. Let us use eyes of wonder to navigate a non-binary world, where certainty is not our goal.

“In contradiction and paradox you can find truth.”
—Denis Villeneuve

Recognizing the wisdom of many offers all of us the opportunity to reawaken our childlike curiosity. And then let us ask ourselves: What are we called to do? How shall we engage in this life when we recognize our place, as Richard Rohr says, as a beloved one and also part of the many? We are more than passengers in this life.



We do not need to discard what has gone before, but instead weave it forward in a more complex and luminous garment. Ecologically we all belong—the person, the plant, the place. We are woven into the very threads of existence. Wisdom speaks to and within all of us—not just sages in a cave. Follow the questions, not the certainties. This is where the greatest possibilities lie. Live with and explore the mystery. Trust in the evolutionary becoming that reflects God’s ongoing presence and abiding love.

—Leslie Wright

Celebrate 800 Years of St. Francis' Canticle of the Creatures

Franciscans worldwide this year are commemorating an 800-year-old prayer that, even in 1225, was a clarion call to protect our common home and live in solidarity with all creation.

Written during a time of personal suffering and illness, the Canticle of the Creatures, one of St. Francis of Assisi's most profound and enduring works, expresses St. Francis' deep connection to God through the natural world. Praising Brother Sun, Sister Moon and all living things, the Canticle radiates humility, gratitude and interconnectedness—values that remain at the heart of Franciscan spirituality.

For the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and their spirituality centers, including Prairiewoods, this anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect. Throughout 2025, we will host special programs and activities inspired by the Canticle's themes of reverence for creation, care for Earth and living in harmony with one another.

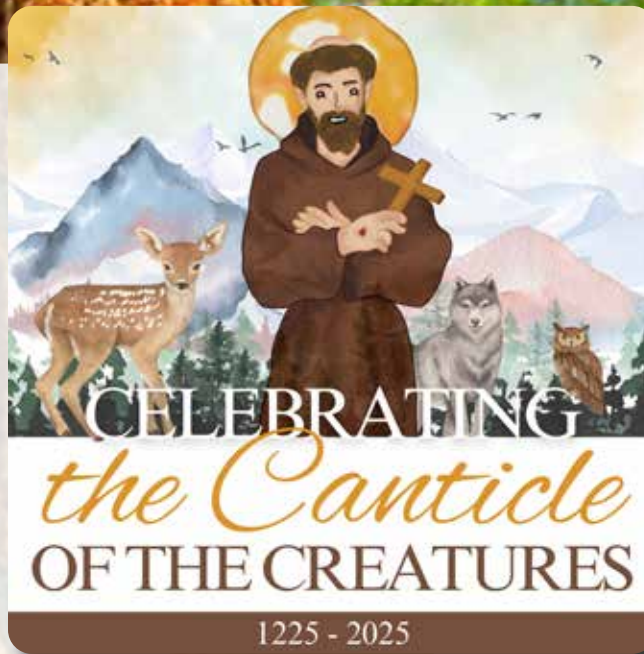
Details about upcoming events and activities will be added throughout the year at fspa.org/centenary. We invite all to join us in this year of remembrance and renewal as we honor St. Francis' timeless message of love and respect for all God's creatures.

Celebrate the Canticle at an Open Mic Night!

Sunday, March 16, 4:30–6 p.m.

Join Prairiewoods in song, dance, art and poetry to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures. The Canticle has influenced many fields—including art, music, literature, science, math, medicine and geography—which emphasizes Francis' enduring legacy in spirituality and science. Join us for an incredible interdisciplinary afternoon of song, poetry, art and dance to enliven our deepening relationship with and protection of all of Creation. Feel free to bring a piece of your art to share!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10



Canticle of the Creatures

by St. Francis of Assisi, 1225

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord,
All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour and all blessings.
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your Name.

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who is the day through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour,

Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all weather's moods,
by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water,
So useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be You my Lord through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You my Lord through our Sister,
Mother Earth
who sustains and governs us,
producing varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praise be You my Lord through those who grant pardon for love of You and bear sickness and trial.
Blessed are those who endure in peace,
By You Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death,
from whom no-one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Blessed are they She finds doing Your Will.
No second death can do them harm.
Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks,
And serve Him with great humility.





SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

*The Awakened Brain:
The New Science of Spirituality &
Our Quest for an Inspired Life*

with researcher & author *Lisa Miller, PhD*

Monday, May 5, & Tuesday, May 6

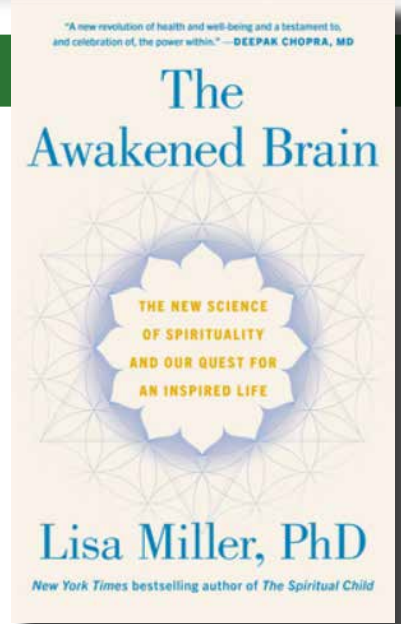
*at First Lutheran Church
(1000 Third Avenue SE in Cedar Rapids)*

Save the Date!

With the continued awareness that mental health can be supported through many different modalities, the work of Lisa Miller, PhD, has captured our attention. You are invited to learn from one of the nation's leading neuroscience researchers about the impact that spirituality can have on our mental wellbeing. This year's *Spirituality in the 21st Century* event will combine cutting-edge science with direct tools for application for people from all walks of life.

Dr. Lisa Miller is a professor of clinical psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. She is the founder and director of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute, the first Ivy League graduate program in spirituality and psychology. For more than a decade, she has held joint appointments in the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical School. Dr. Miller has worked closely with the United States Army, assisting them in educating soldiers about the importance of spiritual fitness. Author of the New York Times best-selling book *The Spiritual Child*, Dr. Miller released a second evidence-based book based on her research in 2021 called *The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life*.

Registration for this event will open soon at
www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century



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

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. 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

Clear is Kind: A Retreat for End of Life Planning (in person)

Friday, Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Jan. 18, 3 p.m.

Facilitators: Gerontologist & end-of-life guide Mary McCall, PhD, & death doula Annie Brownsberger & Sarah Van Cleve

Come for a weekend of honest, open-hearted conversation on preparing for the end of life. This retreat will cover multiple facets of the death and dying process including:

- Practical advanced-care planning tools for medical and end-of-life choices
- Strategies for dealing with Anticipatory Grief in healthy ways

- Opportunities to explore one’s wishes, values and vision of end-of-life to include the creation of a Vigil Plan
- Communication tools for discussing values around medical choices, illness and death
- Dedicated time for reflections through meditation and sound healing, as well as open, honest conversations about our mortality or the mortality of someone we love



This retreat will be helpful to those supporting elderly family members or friends or those seeking guidance in their own journey. Families are welcome!

Fee: \$195 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes 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 our connection to food and to the land through our 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. We will create a personal Food Peace action plan to cultivate peace for self, others and all of creation. We are invited to reconvene at seasonal tables in 2025



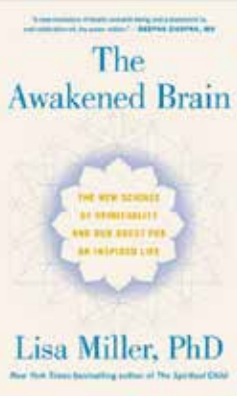
Book Review for "The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality & Our Quest for an Inspired Life" by Lisa Miller, PhD

Thanks in part to Prairiewoods’ annual Spirituality in the 21st Century events, many of us are accustomed to turning our gaze outward to understand the developing relationship between science and spirituality through the lens of the new cosmology. In her book *The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality & Our Quest for an Inspired Life*, Dr. Lisa Miller invites us to turn that gaze around, to turn it inward,

through consideration of our very human neurophysiology. We are each born with the capacity to be spiritual beings. Dr.

Miller shows us how that spiritual capacity interacts with and has the potential to improve our ability to cope, to think things through, to engage more deeply with the world around us. As we walk with her on her own personal journey of discovery throughout the book, we come to understand the impact spiritual experiences and practices have on our brains. We—who have long experience with spirituality—come away with an understanding of why and how “things just go better” when we attend to and nurture that essential part of our daily lives.

We look forward to seeing you at Spirituality in the 21st Century May 5 and 6! Registration details will be available soon.



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. 5–6) and winter (Dec. 13).

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 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. 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



Earth, Body, Mind & Spirit Retreat (in person)

Saturday, Feb. 15, 9 a.m.–Sunday, Feb. 16, 5 p.m.

Facilitator: Shawn Westbrook

Engage in energizing and restorative yoga sessions, find our anchor through guided mindfulness and silent meditation, and savor immersive nature walks with other like-minded individuals. We will explore how we express our individuation within a community and become aware of where our shadow side is present and how to integrate it. This retreat offers a unique blend of movement, mindfulness, integration work and a profound connection to the natural world. Whether you're seeking physical strength, emotional balance or spiritual insight, this retreat will



offer an opportunity to reconnect with the body, mind and spirit to reveal our own unique inner and outer vibrance.

Fee: \$195 includes sessions, Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

Commuter Fee: \$120 includes sessions and Saturday and Sunday lunch

Awakening Awareness of Energy Retreat (in person)

Friday, Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Feb. 23, 1 p.m.

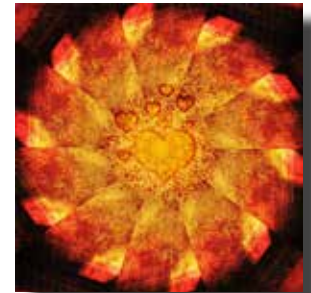
Facilitators: Tammy Bayer & Ann Jackson, PBVM

We host seven different energy centers in our bodies. Scientific research and some spiritual traditions cite that each energy center corresponds to a stage of life. This experiential retreat will invite women of all ages to deeper understanding of the body's energies and engage a variety of meditative practices to integrate the mind, body and spirit for healing and wholeness.

Utilizing wisdom from many resources, including *The 7 Healing Chakras: Unlocking Your Body's Energy Centers* by Brenda Davies, MD, we hope to move through past experiences to rest in the present and animate possibility.

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

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



Japanese Art of Kintsugi: Embracing Our Imperfections with Grace & Courage Retreat (in person)

Friday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m.–Saturday, March 1, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Jean Pagliaro & Julie Connelly

The Japanese art of Kintsugi takes broken pottery and repairs the cracks with gold. These restored bowls, formerly considered worthless, become treasured items of great worth and beauty. We will use this art as a symbol of our spiritual life. Our wounds and failures can easily harden into shame and regret. Yet, if we look at our lives through the eyes of grace and compassion, our painful experiences can be transformed into great sources of inspiration, beauty and wisdom. This retreat will include time for creative expression, presentation, individual reflection and small-group processing.

Fee: \$225 includes sessions, art supplies, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$205 includes sessions, art supplies and Saturday 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!

The Nature of Real Connection: Five Lessons from the Woods Retreat (in person) with Sam Rahberg, March 14–16

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship Spring Table Retreat (in person) with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, March 21–22

Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees Retreat (in person) with Leah Rampy, PhD, March 28–30

Day of Self Renewal (in person)
Thursdays, Jan. 2 & Feb. 6; &
Mondays, Jan. 13 & Feb. 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, 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)

Terra Divina: A Spiritual Practice of Engaging with Earth (in person)
Sundays, Jan. 5 & Feb. 9, 3–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Stephanie Heifner

Join us for a new monthly gathering to practice terra divina and tune into the seasons. Like lectio divina is a sacred reading of 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. We begin with a brief conversation, sharing in learning about the season we are in. We’ll learn the steps of terra divina and then wander independently as we practice for about 40 minutes. We conclude by gathering as a group, sharing bread and herbal tea, and talking about our experiences.

Fee: \$15

Sacred Earth Sacred Soul (Zoom)
Mondays; Jan. 6, Jan. 20, Feb. 3, Feb. 17, March 3 & March 17; 3–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ellen Bruckner

Journey with John Phillip Newell and a small group of spiritual travelers through centuries of Celtic wisdom. In the book *Sacred Earth Sacred Soul*, Newell opens the lives and spiritual teachings of great prophetic figures including Brigid of Kildare, Pelagius, John Muir and Teilhard de Chardin for us as companions on our own spiritual quest. Each life explored expands our own soul’s relationship with Spirit and continues to deepen our relationships with each other and with this world today. The book is required for the series.

Fee: \$40 for six-part series

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)
Wednesdays, Jan. 8 & Feb. 12, 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

What is the future of our planetary spirit? What is our role in the religion of the future? This Christophany Group engages in communal reflection on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin, Ilia Delio, and like-minded scientists and theologians. It meets virtually to discuss challenging books, articles, podcasts, and webinars offered by the Center for Christogenesis and other resources. It is said that an evolving faith is simply faith that is adapting in order to survive.

Fee: Free-will offering

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Forest Bathing with the Wolf Moon:
 Sunday, Jan. 12, 4–6 p.m.

Nature & Forest Therapy

Experience: Mondays, Jan. 13 & Feb. 10, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

Forest Bathing with the Snow

Moon: Wednesday, Feb. 12, 4–6 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: \$25 for longer moon walks, \$20 for shorter experiences

Awaken Your Creativity through Watercolor (in person)

Tuesdays, Jan. 14 & Feb. 18,
9:30–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Barb Thompson

Join hands-on, beginner’s painting workshops that include a tracing sheet, step-by-step instructions and an example to reference as we paint, making them perfect for beginners. Classes start with a few watercolor exercises and a demonstration of the project. Then we will be invited to work at our own pace. In January, we’ll paint a pine bough and some pinecones. In February, we’ll focus on violets, the birth flower of the

month. This is recommended for ages 8–100. Simply bring a positive attitude, ready to learn a new skill!

Fee: \$50 per session includes all art supplies



YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Wednesdays, Jan. 15 & Feb. 19,
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. 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

Native-Style Flute Circle (in person)

Thursdays, Jan. 16 & Feb. 13, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Horizons Flute Store & School (Jonny Lipford & Friends)

Join a friendly Native American-style flute circle that’s open to all. Whether you’re a seasoned player or just curious, this is a great chance to learn and share in a relaxed setting. Bring your own flute or borrow one of ours—we’ll even have some for sale if you’d like to keep the experience going. Spectators are welcome, and you’ll join the music-making before you know it. No need to sign up—just drop by and enjoy the music and community spirit!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 per session

Write Home: Connecting with Source, Self & Place on the Open Page (in person)

Saturdays; Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 8,
April 12 & May 17; 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Facilitator: Cheryl Conklin

When we settle in and open to personal writing, we invite what Christina Baldwin calls “an available intelligence that is greater than we think we have.” Some might say we hear the voice of our soul or a whisper from the Source of All Being. In this five-part series, we’ll discover that conscious breath, open pages and ready hands are tangible, accessible ways into spiritual practice. Connecting silence to

writing and writing to listening, we can become scribes and witnesses to the divine unfolding in, with and around us.
Fee: \$175 for five-part series includes lunch

Grief Circle Series (in person)
Wednesdays; Jan. 22, Feb. 26, March 26, April 23 & May 28; 10 a.m.–12 p.m., plus lunch
Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting & Ian Montgomery

Often, we feel alone in our grieving process, as our culture encourages us to simply move on. In this series, we will be invited to talk about our thoughts, feelings and loss with others. Sometimes those closest to us, while well-intentioned, may not fully understand our grief. The support of others can bring a great deal of comfort and healing. To build trust in our work together, please commit to attending the majority of sessions; the first session is required.
Fee: \$75 for five-part series includes lunch (or free-will offering without lunch)

An Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods (in person)
Thursdays, Jan. 23 & Feb. 20, 4–8 p.m.
Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Leave your devices behind and swap screen time for real-time connection with others. This is 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 bring a book and simply be in the presence of others! 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)

Stories from the Border: One Traveler's Tales from a Place of Migration (hybrid)
Tuesday, Jan. 28, 6–7 p.m.
Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Pope Francis recently said, "Every encounter with people on the move as migrants or refugees is an encounter with Christ." He calls on us to encounter migrants with a welcoming presence and a spirit of solidarity. If you feel called to learn more about the experiences of people migrating into the United States and how you can stand with them, we invite you to a brief presentation. Prairiewoods Marketing Coordinator Andi Lewis and five other women recently spent nine days at the US/

Mexico border to better understand the experiences of migrants coming into the United States. They spoke with migrants, aid workers, border patrol agents, ranchers and environmentalists—all with different and very nuanced views on immigration. Come to Prairiewoods or join us via Zoom as we talk about immigration and learn more from Andi's experiences.
Fee: Instead of a fee, we invite you to donate to the Kino Border Initiative

Labyrinth Walk (in person)
Sunday, Feb. 2, 2–4 p.m.
Facilitator: Leslie Wright

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, we travel 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. Come walk the indoor labyrinth with us to center yourself. 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.
Fee: Free-will offering



Enneagram Workshop Series: Explore Your True Self & Notice Today (in person)
Tuesdays, Feb. 11–March 11, 6–8 p.m.
Facilitator: Michael Beckmann

Discover the profound insights of the Enneagram, a tool for self-discovery and personal growth. Throughout the five-week workshop, prepare to better understand your unique personality, motivations and growth opportunities. Whether you are new to the Enneagram or have some experience with it, our workshop will enhance your understanding and provide practical

applications in your daily life. We will explore the nine core types, their wings and how they interconnect, equipping you to navigate your own personality with greater insight. By the end of this series, you will be better prepared to embrace your strengths, address your challenges and lead a more fulfilling life. Join us on this journey of self-awareness and transformation.

Fee: \$100 for five-week series

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (in person)
Information Sessions: Tuesday, Feb. 11, or Thursday, Feb. 20, 7–8 p.m. (Zoom)
Eight-Week Series: Mondays, March 3–April 21, 5:30–8 p.m.
Retreat Day: Sunday, April 13, 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 wellbeing. This series cultivates 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 for eight weeks with one extended six-and-a-half-hour class. To participate, please attend a free information session.
Fee: \$400 for the eight-week series (*Those working in the human service field may register for just \$100!*)

Micro-Retreat: Intention & Purpose—Let's Get Clear in the New Year! (in person)
Tuesday, Feb. 18, 5:30–8 p.m.
Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Questions of purpose and meaning percolate in different seasons of life. Feelings of longing exist. Why are we still determining or longing for something? Join other seekers for an evening of prayer, mindfulness exercises and creativity to take a step closer to answering the question: "What is my purpose?" or "Why am I here?" Let's gather to explore how nurturing our spirituality is an imperative component to answering these questions.
Fee: \$35 includes dinner

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (in person)
Fridays, Feb. 21 & March 8, 10–11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA
 LovingKindness meditation offers a

daily practice to assist us in being compassionate to ourselves, others and all of creation. Fostering compassion and kindness instead of judgment, anxiety and fearful reaction, this short daily practice can assist us in creating a world environment

that brings forth compassion and creative life-giving choices. This program, offered in February and again in March, includes presentation, practice and discussion.
Fee: \$10

Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; Jan. 2–Feb. 27; 9:30–10:30 a.m. (gentle yoga) & 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)

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

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

Thursdays, Jan. 2 & Feb. 6, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

This gentle class involves healing energy and movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice.

Fee: \$12

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays, Jan. 2 & Feb. 6, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

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

Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, Jan. 2–Feb. 27, 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; Jan. 2, Jan. 16, Feb. 6 & Feb. 20; 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

Mindfulness at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays, Jan. 6–Feb. 24, 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

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person) first & third Mondays; Jan. 6, Jan. 20, Feb. 3 & Feb. 17; 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

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

Fee: \$12 per session

Men Exploring Faith (in person)

second & fourth Thursdays; Jan. 9, Jan. 23, Feb. 13 & Feb. 27; 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 (in person)

Saturdays, Jan. 11 & Feb. 8, 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

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

second Mondays, Jan. 13 & Feb. 10, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

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

Fee: \$10

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

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

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity.

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; Jan. 14, Jan. 28, Feb. 11 & Feb. 25; 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

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

For Adults: Wednesdays, Jan. 15 & Feb. 19, 5:30–7 p.m.

For Children and the Adults Who Support Them:

Wednesdays, Jan. 22 & Feb. 12, 5:30–7 p.m.

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

Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark in monthly grief groups.

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

Drum Circle (in person)

Sundays, Jan. 19 & Feb. 16, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Come for a lively drum circle—we'll have you drumming in no time!

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

Lessons from the Land

When the temperatures drop, the number of hours of daylight shortens and a tree's sugar intake is reduced, the leaves shine the most. We all marvel in the beauty of brilliant oranges, deep reds and bright yellow hues that the trees have been hiding under shades of green the entire season. Something about the changing of nature is awe-inspiring, filling us with peace, wonder and hope. Some of us even travel across state lines to experience it! Now our deciduous tree friends stand naked with only twigs and buds to show. That is if they're not the oaks that have adapted to hold their leaves longer to protect their buds from frost and foraging—a process known in botany terms as *marcescence*. Inevitably they will fall and decay and give back to the soil in which their roots grow, living out their regenerative cycle. As poet Robert Frost beautifully wrote, "Nothing gold can stay."

The leaves may have fallen, but the sacred land appears rejuvenated and alive after taking in the much-needed fall rain, giving roots a good drink before winter. Tree roots will continue to absorb water in the winter months, while conifers lose water through transpiration from their needles, so it is important for them to stock up going into winter. Dry Creek is once again as high as it was in the spring months, and the ducks are paying short visits as they migrate through, proving that animals will always go where there is water. We take notice of more hawks soaring above in the breezing fall updrafts, deer rubbing on young trees and invasive species still holding their leaves. The birds and butterflies have migrated south, the squirrels are well fed and stocked with their winter rations. Bees and snakes (yes,



they are abundant!) are in their underground nests, and you yourself may be taking time to rest and recuperate from the long (or short) year past.

The gifts of energy and healing that our land provides are plentiful. What did you receive from Mother Earth this year? Perhaps fertile soil to grow your garden. Maybe you relaxed in the shade or stood in a cleansing spring rain. Perhaps you planted a tree to remember a loved one or removed that pesky invasive plant to make room for a native. As you take time to rest and practice dormancy with the trees, please be reminded to take in the beauty of a snow-covered pine and breathe in the crisp cold air. Winter can be a wonderful time to study trees—from their bark and buds to their structure and the nature in which they thrive. We can all find growth from what the land teaches us. Use this winter season to reflect on your time spent in nature. Is there more you want to do next year? Grow something from seed, plant that pocket prairie, collect seeds, journal, make the jam from berries or pie from the apple tree? Make those plans!

With the help of our foundresses, staff and volunteers, we have cultivated a strong relationship with the land around us this year. In planting over 500 native trees and plants to set root, burning prairies that thrive in the spring rain, growing produce to feed the hungry, and building community through friendship and sustainable practices—the land has enriched our spirits. We are thankful for your partnership and hopeful for a new year's growth ahead. We hope to see you on the trails, deepening your spirituality by way of ecology. Finding peace in nature.

Our Guests Say It Best!

Here are a few comments from recent Prairiewoods guests about their time with the land:

"These grounds pulse with Indigenous spirituality. We are all One. Everything is Sacred."

—Diane F, Silent Directed Retreat participant

"Thank you! This is absolutely heaven on earth. The stewardship, love and care for the grounds and overall

space is truly a blessing. This is my second time at this retreat. Each time has been full of clarity—for me and my purpose here in this physical world. I absolutely LOVE the outdoor space. I love being in nature, being warmed in the sun—being one with it all."

—Jodi I., Silent Directed Retreat participant

"I love walking the grounds especially the woods. I feel an immediate sense of peace the minute I turn into Prairiewoods."

—private retreatant

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:



In a poem sometimes attributed to St. Francis, we are called to find hope in the midst of despair:

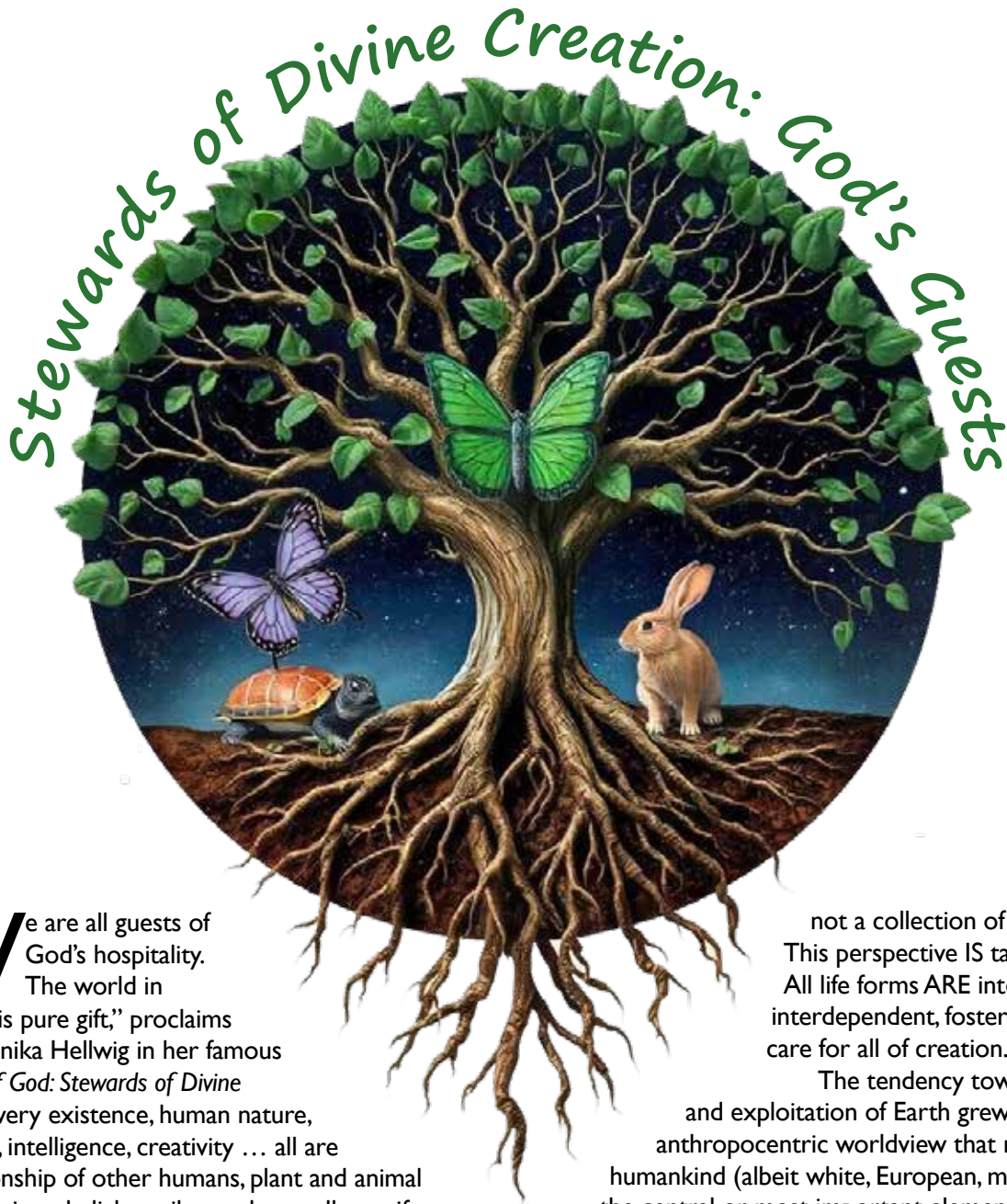
"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy."

*May you find deep, abiding peace
in your soul and in our world
in the coming year.*

March/April 2025

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



“We are all guests of God’s hospitality. The world in which we live is pure gift,” proclaims theologian Monika Hellwig in her famous work *Guests of God: Stewards of Divine Creation*. Our very existence, human nature, consciousness, intelligence, creativity ... all are gift. Companionship of other humans, plant and animal life, water, air, minerals, light, soil, sun, sky ... all are gift. Grateful for this generous Source of All Being, how are we to live?

As Guests: A Shift from Ownership to Kinship

We are shifting from dominion over Earth to kinship—from ownership to kinship—from host to guest! Can you feel it? For more than 50 years, cultural historian Thomas Berry emphasized the need for a new relationship with Earth, stating, “The universe is a communion of subjects,

not a collection of objects.” This perspective IS taking hold! All life forms ARE interconnected, interdependent, fostering respect and care for all of creation.

The tendency toward dominion and exploitation of Earth grew out of an anthropocentric worldview that regarded humankind (albeit white, European, male humans) as the central or most important element of existence, especially as opposed to God, plant or animal species. This has led to environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, pollution, disrespect for the gift of all of life, disconnection from the natural world, overconsumption—a looming climate crisis. Al Gore, former vice president and environmental advocate, warns, “*The climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity.*”

(continued on page 3)

PRAIRIEWOODS STAFF

Aaron Brewer
Land Sustainability
Coordinator

Derek Doan
Cook

Joann Gehling, FSPA
Holistic Services, Spiritual
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Trace Harshman
Housekeeper

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Coordinator, Spiritual
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Christine Kirpes
Garden Coordinator

Andi Lewis
Marketing Coordinator

Erik Meggers
Maintenance Coordinator

Sandy Rosenberger
Development Coordinator

Nancy Schrimper
Office Administrator

Leslie Schwarting
Spiritual Director & Retreat
Facilitator

Jean Sullivan
Outreach, Engagement &
Hospitality Coordinator

Julio Vera
Massage Therapist

Lucille Winnike, FSPA
Retreats, Spiritual Director

Leslie Wright
Director

Ali Yoka
Chef & Kitchen Manager



I am writing this in the early days of the new year. This is a time when our thoughts often turn to resolutions and new beginnings. In 2024, Prairiewoods' expanded solar array went live, and we began some small initiatives to reduce waste, such as composting our brown paper towels. But as the year came to a close, we began to wonder "what's next?" How might we increase our relationship with and care of Creation in 2025? Prior efforts have included straw-bale hermitages, solar arrays, LEED certification and avoidance of single-use products. The LEED certification process guided us during the mid-2000s.

But in the 12 years since our certification, much has changed and much has been learned. Perhaps most importantly was the realization of our need to move from a net zero approach to sustainability to a measurably regenerative approach that heals and renews.

This is a tall order. We will need a roadmap to guide us, a stewardship plan. A plan that will guide our decisions with regards to our built environment and operational practices for the next several years. With the help of talented volunteers and staff, we will begin to build this plan in 2025 with a goal to have it ready for our 30th anniversary in 2026.

The first step was to begin to name the principles that will guide us into the future. To do this, we looked at indigenous design principles, the Living Building Challenge, regenerative design principles and the principles of ecological spirituality and St. Francis. As a result, here are some of the key questions we will be asking ourselves this year:

- How might we contribute to the renewal and restoration of our planet by creating a net positive environmental impact here at Prairiewoods?
- How might we move beyond sustainability, striving to meet our current needs while ensuring that future generations can thrive?
- How might we foster a harmonious balance between humans and the natural world?
- How might we foster unity and collective purpose in caring for Earth and one another?

We will be guided by the wisdom of the natural world and the Franciscan principles of our foundresses. Will you join us in reflecting on these questions in 2025?

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright

foundresses Joann Gehling, Betty Daugherty & Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, at our LEED celebration, Dec. 14, 2012



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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(continued from page 1)

The current, colonial, capitalist society focuses on profit over people, individual over collective, disregard for all life as "property" to be owned. People of European descent have much to learn from the wisdom of Indigenous people who fully embody kinship—living directly in touch with nature. Shifting from a mentality of ownership to a sense of kinship and stewardship with and as Earth is critical. The time is NOW. "What did you do when you knew?" cries environmental activist and poet Drew Dellinger.

What we do, consume, produce, enjoy carries implications far beyond the network of human and wiser ecological relationships than we realize. Recognizing our kinship with Earth inspires deeper sustainable behaviors and policies that protect the environment for future generations. Monika Hellwig emphasized the importance of community and shared responsibility, stating, "We are not isolated individuals but part of a larger whole." This perspective impels us to act collectively to address justice issues. As guests and stewards of divine creation, we actually, Hellwig suggests, co-create with the Source of All Being's hospitality in three ways:

- We are unfinished creatures entrusted with our own becoming. Faced with infinite choices, we dwell in possibility. Yet, we squander time and talents by failing to reflect on the gift of life, dedicating our purpose and presence to focus and shape what we become together.
- We co-evolve with the Source of All Being to shape the universe, its ecology, use of mineral resources, etc. We must assume our human responsibility to cooperate with Source to develop spiritual, scientific and technological knowledge and competencies that serve social and ecological justice and equality throughout the world.
- We mediate relationship with one another and all of creation by how we offer or restrict access of others to associate and act, establish law and customs, regulate who and how decisions are made regarding natural resources and human products ... Everything we do or don't accept in cultures, civilizations and economies impacts kinship.

Kinship invites us to expand our web of responsibility to include the wisdom of Indigenous languages and practices, to value, nurture and sustain those systems for the sake of all life.

Awakening to our connection with Earth—as Earthlings—we consciously move toward a more balanced, fulfilling life. The research of Prairiewoods' Spirituality in the 21st Century featured speaker, neuroscientist Lisa Miller, PhD, confirms that "we are all on a path of awakening, again and again facing new challenges, closing and opening doors, moving ever and always toward great awakening" (*The Awakened Brain*, page 237). Neuroscience cites that humans have an innate, hard-wired capacity for transcendent awareness—to see into the deeper nature of life—KINSHIP!

What do we do with this capacity? Share it with all forms of life! Dr. Miller's research reveals that when humans cultivate this innate capacity—kinship—it leads to greater resilience and health. "Individuals who cultivate a strong spiritual core are less likely to experience despair, addiction and depression," Dr. Miller states. Developing an awakened brain involves recognizing our interconnectedness with every life force on Earth.

This awareness motivates environmentally conscious behaviors as individuals perceive the planet's wellbeing as integral to their own. We build an awakened global society! Justice is practiced through interdependent kinship and love. We treat all living beings and systems as part of an encompassing, interconnected web of life. Amid seemingly irreconcilable differences, people find common ground. We embrace imagination and approach work as an opportunity to further human calling and contribution. Schools embrace the responsibility and opportunity to nurture the spiritual core of all children. In this spirit of reciprocity among kin, all life and all cultures invite us to awaken to a reality much larger than any one individual or system or culture or civilization, and to translate that wisdom and inspiration into decisions and actions that serve the common good.

An Invitation to Awaken to Intersecting Justice Issues for the Sake of Future Generations

Everything connects. Consider the impact of kinship on:

- **Ecospirituality:** Integrating spiritual awareness with ecological activism fosters a holistic approach to environmental justice.
- **Immigration:** Environmental degradation often leads to displacement. Recognizing our shared responsibility can drive efforts to address the root causes of climate-induced migration.
- **Gift Economy:** A kinship consciousness that encourages sharing resources sustainably, challenging consumerism and promoting equitable distribution.
- **Democracy:** Inclusive decision-making that considers the well-being of the planet and all its inhabitants strengthens democratic processes.

Shifting our consciousness from dominion over Earth to one of kinship enhances all dimensions of life and animates our innate spiritual capacities. In the words of Judy Cannato, an author focused on ecospiritual growth, "We are called to awaken to a new way of being in the world, one that recognizes the sacredness of all creation." Let's heed this call, embracing kinship and working toward a just and sustainable future for all.

For a deeper understanding of the neuroscience behind spirituality and its benefits, you may find the following talk by Dr. Lisa Miller insightful: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuBDmIRThk. We also invite you to join Dr. Miller for Spirituality in the 21st Century. (See pages 4–5.)

—Ann Jackson, PBVM



The Awakened Brain

with **Researcher & Author Lisa Miller, PhD**
Professor of Clinical Psychology at Columbia University

Monday, May 5, & Tuesday, May 6

at First Lutheran Church (1000 3rd Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
Costs begin at \$25.

Scan the QR code or register today at prairiewoods.org/spirituality-in-the-21st-century



Can cultivating spirituality promote a healthy brain?

Learn from Dr. Lisa Miller, one of the nation's leading neuroscientists and founder and director of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute at Columbia University. Dr. Miller combines cutting-edge science with direct tools for application for all people.

What impact does spirituality have on the brain & wellbeing?

According to Dr Miller's research, those reporting a moderate or high level of spirituality are:

- **60%** less likely to have significant depression
- **70%** less likely to engage in risky behaviors
- **80%** less likely to become addicted to alcohol and drugs

How will this impact our community?

"To shape a narrative from your experiences, and to connect your story to a greater one, is essential for developing empathy, a sense of purpose and wellbeing."
—Tonya Hotchkin,
Tanager Place

"Adopting a highly attentive mindset, as Dr. Miller advocates, can transform the way we engage with youth and families in the field of mental health. By shifting our focus from solely achieving goals to cultivating awareness, we strengthen relationships, identify subtle indicators of wellbeing, and foster social and emotional development. This approach encourages us to meet people where they are, honoring their unique experiences and promoting healing through genuine connection. When we practice attentiveness, we enhance our capacity to inspire, empower and support growth in those we serve."
—Kimberly Abram , Cedar Rapids Community School District

SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Spirituality & Mental Health

The New Science of Spirituality & Our Quest for an Inspired Life

Participate in one of three sessions, either in person or virtually. (Online option is Monday only.)

Monday, May 5, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person or online)

Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)

Tuesday, May 6, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (in person)

Keynote, Daily Practices Workshop, Lunch & Book Signing (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in human services or with youth)
\$40 (includes lunch, \$10 for students, books available for purchase & Dr. Miller available for signing)

Tuesday, May 6, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person)

Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in healthcare; CME & CEU credits available)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)

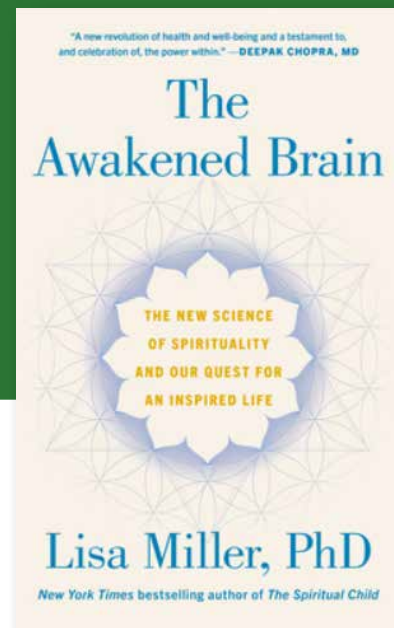
The MedQuarter Regional Medical District and its Faith & Medicine Task Force recognize the importance of both the physical and mental health of the community. By bringing Dr. Lisa Miller to the area to present about her research on spirituality and its impacts on physical and mental health, the community will have an opportunity to learn how spirituality can play a role in personal health that is meaningful and relevant, especially in today's challenging health environment.

"The change I would make is to prioritize time for the practices that help me find my peace, understand my place in the world, help me find meaning in life experiences and help me manage life's stressors. That would look like more yoga, more swimming, more time being in nature. More conversations with friends and strangers about the beauty in music, live theater and visual arts."

—Barb Gay, Zero Suicide Institute

"Everyone needs to find peace and support in a way that makes sense for them. Understanding how spirituality or connection impacts our own mental health can be critical in finding an improved quality of life. The more we learn about the world around us, the better equipped we are to manage what comes!"

—Emily Blomme, Foundation 2



Continue the learning with an advance book study and a follow-up retreat!

The Awakened Brain Book Study (Zoom) with Leslie Schwarting, Thursdays, March 27–April 24 (See page 9.)

Cultivating an Awakened Brain Retreat (in person) with Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Leslie Schwarting; Friday, June 20–Saturday, June 21 (See our website.)

Sponsored by



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

The Nature of Real Connection: Five Lessons from the Woods Retreat (in person)

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

Facilitator: Sam Rahberg

A Retreat for Men

There are no shortages of responsibilities and relationships in a day, yet we are still left hungry for something more. We don't want transactional conversations; we want real connection. What can we do to find that? Join a weekend retreat with other men who are curious about these questions. We will look toward nature for some insight and encouragement. We'll explore the deep bonds between people and the natural world. Through short presentations, time in nature and interactive conversations, we will explore five lessons from the woods—grounding in the present, building community, embracing change, learning from the elders, and giving and receiving. Each day offers opportunities for real conversation, relaxation and spiritual renewal.

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

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



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

Friday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, March 22, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Spring invites a spirit of discovery as seeds break open with sprouts emerging from the seemingly sleepy soil, enlivening Earth once again with vibrant color and growth. Impelled and inspired by the determination of the tiniest of sprouts peeking through winter's final snowfall, we, too, begin to awaken from dormancy. Explore with a learning community how spring sprouts provide opportunities to transform our relationships with self, others and Earth through our personal food choices. To deepen our understanding of all that the season has to offer, we'll draw on the wisdom of environmentalists, mystics, poets and contemporary sages. Using our senses, such as taste, smell and touch, we'll connect with the greening power of spring foods, such as asparagus, spinach and kale. Bring ideas for resourcing spring foods from local sources or healthy, springtime recipes to share as we gather around the spring table in peace and relationship.

Fee: \$150 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Friday dinner through Saturday lunch

Commuter Fee: \$100 includes sessions, Friday dinner and Saturday lunch



“Trees show us how to grow toward the life-giving light ... collaborating and sharing with others in community so that all might thrive. Trees know the importance of darkness, when they can droop and rest ... We, too, must chart our path in sunshine and shadow, drawing on the wisdom of trees to guide us.”

—Leah Rampy & Beth Norcross,
Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees

Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees Retreat (in person)

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

Facilitator: Leah Rampy, PhD (*last year's Spirituality in the 21st Century* facilitator!)

We live in uncertain times, poised on the edge of increasingly rapid change and loss for Earth, ourselves and all that we love. Our connections to the living world have frayed, and it's difficult to find our way back to the relationships and possibilities for which we long. Yet, there is wisdom available to us for living in these fraught times; there is guidance close at hand that can point the way to healing and wholeness for our days and the times beyond. We'll look to the ancient spiritual and ecological wisdom that trees have to offer. Trees, our elders who have graced Earth far longer than the human family, demonstrate living in community and collaborating for mutual benefit. They invite us to open more fully to the awe and wonder of this world, allowing our awareness of sacred oneness to deepen. In the company of trees, we'll be called to bear witness to loss and to expand our hearts to hold our grief alongside joy and beauty. With group conversation, optional practices, and spacious time for wandering or sitting in silence with trees, we'll seek to enliven our understanding of resilience, healing and hope and bring home the blessings of this retreat time.

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

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



Retreat Brochure Available!

To help you prepare for the months ahead, Prairiewoods has created a six-month Retreat Brochure with details on retreats we will host in the coming months. To download a printable copy, visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats. If you would like us to mail you a copy, please send your mailing address to alewis@prairiewoods.org.

Save the Date!

for these in-person retreats:

A Spring Day in the Garden & Woods with Scott Koepke & Aaron Brewer, Friday, May 16–Saturday, May 17

Exploring Traditional Chinese Meditative, Healing & Martial Arts with Gerry Hopkins, Friday, May 16–Sunday, May 18

The Power of Silence: June Silent Directed Retreat with Prairiewoods spiritual directors, Sunday, June 8–Saturday, June 14

Joyful Teaching: Cultivating Joy through Mindfulness & Social & Emotional Learning with Sarah Montgomery, PhD, & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Monday, June 16–Wednesday, June 18; & Wednesday, June 18–Friday, June 20

Cultivating an Awakened Brain with Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Leslie Schwarting; Friday, June 20–Saturday, June 21

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship Summer Table with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Friday, June 27–Saturday, June 28

What's This Mindfulness Stuff All About Anyway? (in person)
Tuesdays, Feb. 25–March 18,
4:30–6 p.m.

Facilitator: Ann Jackson PBVM

Join a learning community of mindfulness practitioners. Come explore together various mindfulness activities and walk away each week with mindful practices to utilize in your everyday life. Themes will include mindful eating, mindful speaking and listening, mindfully cultivating kindness amid grief and mindfully moving to become still.

Fee: \$75 for four-week series

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (in person)
Mondays, March 3–April 21,
5:30–8 p.m.; & Sunday, April 13,
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 wellbeing. This series cultivates the skill of mindfulness through formal

meditation practices and informal integrative practices. It consists of a two-and-a-half-hour class each week for eight weeks with one extended six-and-a-half-hour silent retreat day.

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

Zumba with Julio (in person)
Wednesdays, March 5–April 30,
5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Julio Vera

Zumba is a high-energy fitness class that combines dance and aerobic exercises set to upbeat Latin and international music. It's a fun, full-body workout suitable for all fitness levels, blending easy-to-follow choreography with cardio, muscle conditioning and balance. It's perfect for anyone looking to stay active while having a great time!

Fee: \$10 per session

Day of Self Renewal (in person)
Thursdays, March 6 & April 3;
Mondays, March 10 & April 14; &
Fridays, March 28 & April 11;
8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

Now offered on Fridays, too!

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group meditation practices, 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, spiritual arts, mindfulness, 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, group meditation practices, private guest room for the day and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (in person)
Saturday, March 8, 10–11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA

LovingKindness meditation offers a daily practice to assist us in being compassionate to ourselves, others and all of creation. Fostering compassion and kindness instead of judgment, anxiety and fearful reaction, this short daily practice can assist us in creating a world environment that brings forth compassion and creative life-

giving choices. This program includes presentation, practice and discussion.

Fee: \$10

Terra Divina: A Spiritual Practice of Engaging with Earth (in person)
Sundays, March 9 & April 13,
3–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Stephanie Heifner

Like lectio divina is a sacred reading of 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 engage in conversation with nature. We begin with a brief conversation, sharing in learning about the season we are in. We learn the steps of terra divina and then wander independently as we practice for about 40 minutes. We conclude by gathering as a group, sharing bread and herbal tea, and talking about our experiences.

Fee: \$15

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)
Nature & Forest Therapy Experience: Mondays, March 10 & April 14, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon: Friday, March 14, & Saturday, April 12, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Emelia Sautter

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.

Fee: \$25 for longer moon walks, \$20 for shorter experiences

Starting Seeds & Transplants (in person)
Monday, March 10, 6:30–7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Linn County Master Gardener Phil Pfister

Starting flowers and vegetables from seed is not only fun and satisfying, but it can also be a cost-effective way of expanding your garden varieties. We'll learn tips and techniques on seeding, transplanting and setting plants out in the garden, as well as extending the early and late growing season.

Fee: Free-will offering

Programs

Celebrate the 800th anniversary of *The Canticle of the Creatures*, a prayer that, even in 1225, was a clarion call to protect our common home and live in

solidarity with all creation. Written by St. Francis of Assisi during a time of personal suffering and illness, *The Canticle* expresses St. Francis' deep connection to God through the natural world. Praising Brother Sun, Sister Moon and all living things, *The Canticle* radiates humility, gratitude and interconnectedness—values that remain at the heart of Franciscan spirituality. Join us for one of these programs celebrating *The Canticle of the Creatures* and all of Creation!

Solar Appreciation Day (in person) **Friday, March 14, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

Facilitators: area solar energy experts

Honor the power of the sun and its incredible contribution to a sustainable future! Let's learn more about this powerful resource together. This morning will include talks with experts about solar energy's role in combating climate change, a reading of the *The Canticle*, sun-inspired refreshments and the chance to connect with fellow sun enthusiasts. Whether you're a solar expert or just curious, this event is for you.

Fee: free-will offering

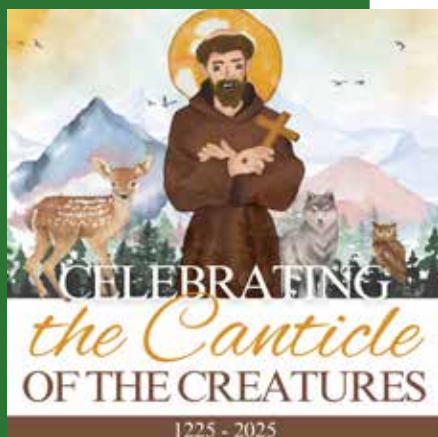
Earth Day Celebration of *The Canticle of the Creatures* (in person)

Tuesday, April 22, 12–1 p.m. or 5–6 p.m.

Facilitators: Christine Kirpes & Leslie Schwarting

Honor the beauty of creation and our shared responsibility to protect it. This special Earth Day walk celebrates the interconnectedness of all life. It will include a reflective reading of *The Canticle*, a guided walk through the Prairiewoods trails, and a community prayer and commitment to care for our planet. Let's come together in gratitude for our common home and embrace the spirit of stewardship and harmony with all of nature. All are welcome to this celebration of Earth, nature and faith!

Fee: free-will offering



Awaken Your Creativity through Watercolor (in person)

Tuesday, March 11, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Barb Thompson

Join a hands-on, beginner's painting workshop that includes a tracing sheet, step-by-step instructions and an example to reference as we paint, making it perfect for beginners. Class starts with a few watercolor exercises and a demonstration of the project. Then we will be invited to work at our own pace to paint a festive clover wreath. This is recommended for ages 8–100. Simply bring a positive attitude, ready to learn a new skill!

Fee: \$50 includes all art supplies



Native-Style Flute Circle (in person)

Thursdays, March 13 & April 17, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Horizons Flute Store & School (Jonny Lipford & friends)

Join a friendly Native American-style flute circle that's open to all. Whether you're a seasoned player or just curious, this is a great chance to learn and share in a relaxed setting. Bring your own flute or borrow one of ours—we'll even have some for sale if you'd like to keep the experience going. Spectators are welcome, and you'll join the music-making before you know it. No need to sign up—just drop by and enjoy the music and community spirit!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 per session

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Wednesdays, March 19 & April 16, 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. 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

An Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods (in person)

Thursdays, March 20 & April 10, 4:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Leave your devices behind and swap screen time for real-time connection with others. This is 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

ONE WORLD LISTENING

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

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together will be available. Or bring a book and simply be in the presence of others! Come and go as you please, as there will not be a formal program.
Fee: \$5 includes soup and salad

Grief Circle Series (in person)
Wednesdays; March 26, April 23,
May 28, June 25 & July 23;
10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting & Ian Montgomery

Often, we feel alone in our grieving process, as our culture encourages us to simply move on. In this five-part series, we will be invited to talk about our thoughts, feelings and loss with others. Sometimes those closest to us, while well-intentioned, may not fully understand our grief. The support of others can bring a great deal of comfort and healing. To build trust in our work together, please commit to attending the majority of sessions; the first session is required.

Fee: Free-will offering

The Awakened Brain Book Study (Zoom)

Thursdays, March 27–April 24,
7:30–8:45 a.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Join us for a transformative journey through Dr. Lisa Miller's groundbreaking book *The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life*. This book study invites us to explore the profound connection between science, spirituality and mental health. Let's engage in some deep discussions on how spirituality shapes our resilience, creativity and wellbeing. We'll share insights into the neuroscience behind the awakened brain, as well as reflective exercises and group sharing to connect the book's ideas to our personal life. This book study will give us deeper insights into Dr. Miller's research and writings before she leads our Spirituality in the 21st Century event May 5–6. Whether you're a seasoned spiritual seeker or simply curious about the science of the mind, this book study will inspire and enlighten you!

Fee: \$45 for five-week book study includes the book (or \$20 if you already own the book)

Circle of Trust® (in person)
Saturday, April 5, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Thomas Dean

Give yourself the time and space to engage your whole, authentic self with courage and support as we explore the questions of your life. During these

Eco-Grief: Finding Hope Across Generations (Zoom)

Thursday, March 27, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Victoria Loorz, Kayla Jacobs & Gabriela Martinez

Participate in a transformative webinar exploring a spiritual approach to dealing with eco-grief and intergenerational action for our common home. Learn from Victoria Loorz, an expert in the field, and two youth climate activists who will share their experiences, challenges and ways they sustain hope while advocating for change. We will explore the emotional and spiritual impacts of the climate crisis and offer pathways to hope and resilience. Together, we'll reflect on how to transform despair into meaningful action and hope for the future.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$15

quarterly, day-long Circle of Trust® retreats (also offered July 12, Oct. 4 and Jan. 10), we will co-create trustworthy space to listen to the wisdom of our personal inner teacher in community with others. Discerning our authentic selves, our "hidden wholeness," as Parker Palmer calls it, happens when we honor our integrity and pay attention to our inner source of truth. Through Circles of Trust, we renew our courageous spirit as we align our inner and outer selves—our "soul" and "role"—and journey toward personal and societal wholeness. Each gathering will include poems, stories, songs, artwork and activities from diverse cultures and wisdom traditions, offering opportunities for individual reflection, trustworthy sharing and deep listening. Attend one, some or all of these circle gatherings, which are open to all, regardless of background or belief.

Fee: \$50 per session, or \$175 for the four-part series (if paid in advance)

Building Great Garden Soil (in person)

Thursday, April 10, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linn County Master Gardener Phil Pfister

Great gardens start with rich, fertile, healthy soil. We'll discuss best practices for building and maintaining healthy soils, including composting, cover crops, mulching, soil amendments, till versus no-till, watering practices and more.

Fee: Free-will offering

Mandala Drawing Workshop (in person)

Friday, April 11, 9:30–10:30 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



Spring Edible Perennial Gardening Workshop (in person)

Tuesday, April 15, 1–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes

Discover the art of growing perennial rhubarb and asparagus and how we have incorporated them into our permaculture beds in the Green Prairie Garden at Prairiewoods. Topics will include choosing hardy, productive varieties of rhubarb and asparagus; preparing your beds; planting and caring for plants during and after harvest to minimize maintenance; best planting practices for long-term growth; and tips for harvesting and incorporating these perennials into your meals. This class is perfect for beginners and seasoned gardeners interested in creating productive, eco-friendly gardens.

Fee: Free-will offering

Finding Flowers Among the Weeds (in person)

Saturday, April 26, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Jasia Standley of Graceful Bear Wellness

Spring is in the air, and the forest is waking up! Join us for a delightful guided nature walk as we explore the woods in search of edible plants. Learn to identify plants like violets and dandelions, discover how valuable many plants commonly known as weeds can be, and enjoy the beauty of nature in full bloom. We'll learn how to spot several edible and medicinal plants in their natural habitat and connect with fellow nature lovers. This will be a great outing for families or individuals!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$5 for individuals or \$10 for families

Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; March 3–April 28; 9:30–10:30 a.m. (gentle yoga) & 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)

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, March 3–April 28, 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

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

first & third Mondays; March 3, March 17, April 7 & April 21; 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

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

Fee: \$12 per session

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

first Wednesdays, March 5 & April 2, 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

Engage in communal reflection on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin, Ilia Delio and similar deep thinkers.

Fee: Free-will offering

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

Thursdays, March 6 & April 3, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

This gentle class involves healing energy and movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice.

Fee: \$12

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays, March 6 & April 3, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

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

Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, March 6–April 24, 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; March 6, March 20, April 3 & April 17; 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

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

second Mondays, March 10 & April 14, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

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

Fee: \$10

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, March 11 & April 8, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, March 26 & April 23, 6–8 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 11, March 25, April 8 & April 22; 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

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

For Children: Wednesdays, March 12 & April 9, 5:30–7 p.m.

For Adults: Wednesdays, March 19 & April 16, 5:30–7 p.m.

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

Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark in monthly grief groups.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the children's group)

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second & fourth Thursdays; March 13, March 27, April 10 & April 24; 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

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery (in person)

Sundays, March 30 & April 6, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Come for a lively drum circle—we'll have you drumming in no time!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but this is free for all to enjoy)

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony (in person)

Saturdays, March 8 & April 26, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2 p.m., 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

Local Businesses, Nonprofits & Social Groups Host Meetings at Prairiewoods

Have you ever wondered who else comes to Prairiewoods? We have a wonderfully diverse set of relationships developed over many years of hosting groups. Businesses from small (Friendship Yoga) to medium (Big Grove Brewery) to large (Collins Aerospace) come for retreats, planning meetings and off-campus gatherings. Many nonprofits that serve the corridor have trainings and celebrations here (Trees Forever, Catherine McCauley Center, UnityPoint) and sometimes use the time to take a step away for opportunities for learning and reflection. Organizations in the public sector (Iowa Health and Human Services, AmeriCorps and Master Gardeners) gather to plan next steps and offer programs. In addition to interfaith organizations, we host Episcopalians, Methodists, Catholics, Jews, Lutherans, Quakers, Buddhists, Unitarian Universalists, and those from the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ. Educators and administrators come from Cedar River Academy, Cedar Rapids School District, Kirkwood, Coe, Cornell, Mount Mercy, University of Dubuque and the University of Iowa—and sometimes they bring their students with them! We also welcome artists and craftspeople (Old Capital Quilters' Guild, Embroiderer's Guild, Horizons Flute School, and many, many writing groups) and offer a time and space for focus, concentration and inspiration!

Some come for a 90-minute meeting, others stay for three days. Some are all business when they are here, while others build time into their agendas for labyrinth walks and hikes to Grandmother Oak. Others make sure there are gaps in their programming so that participants might schedule a massage, reflexology, healing touch or spiritual direction.

If you'd like to make a reservation, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/book-a-meeting-space.

“ Re-igniting the Spirit of Caring is a three-day workshop designed to reconnect participants to their purpose. Participants gain insight and expand their ability to care for themselves, their colleagues, and the patients and families they serve in the healthcare environment. Prairiewoods provides a peaceful and nurturing space that is ideal for our participants to disconnect from the stressful healthcare environment. We feel extremely fortunate to have access to such a wonderful facility in our community.”

—Carol Meade, UnityPoint



Our Guests Say It Best!

Here are a few comments from recent Prairiewoods guests about hosting their meetings or workshops at Prairiewoods:

“It is always heartwarming to participate in (this event). It has been particularly delightful while the event has been hosted at Prairiewoods. You and everyone we met there exude kindness and compassion. Together, you make an

already awe-inspiring place even more welcoming. Thank you for your hospitality.”

—Robin B., community event facilitator

“Thank you for your wonderful hospitality. Prairiewoods has always been a very sacred place for us to come and be renewed.”

—meeting participant

“We love Prairiewoods and all the wonderful people that help make it a comfortable, loving and peaceful place! Thank you!”

—Jonny L., workshop facilitator

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.



Prairie Woods Franciscan Spirituality Center
120 E Boyson Rd
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SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Spirituality & Mental Health

The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality & Our Quest for an Inspired Life

with **Researcher & Author Lisa Miller, PhD** • **Monday, May 5, & Tuesday, May 6**
at First Lutheran Church (1000 3rd Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa)

Monday, May 5, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person or online)

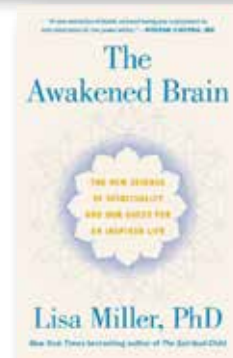
Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)

Tuesday, May 6, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (in person)

Keynote, Daily Practices Workshop, Lunch & Book Signing (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in human services or with youth)
\$40 (includes lunch, \$10 for students, books available for purchase & Dr. Miller available for signing)

Tuesday, May 6, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person)

Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in healthcare; CME & CEU credits available)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)



Please choose one session to attend. See pages 4–5 for complete details.

May/June 2025

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Building Bridges to Unity in Diversity

For the last year, we have been exploring six important principles that are central to an ecological spirituality. Principles that are supported by science as well as our own experience. We have talked about the Universe Story, transcending dualism, revisiting a sense of oneness, multi-disciplinary wisdom and moving from dominion to kinship. The sixth principle is this: *diversity is the very heart of wholeness and wellbeing.* Just as a rainbow of food creates a healthy body and an orchestra with many instruments creates beautiful music, a woodland full of diverse plant and animal life creates a thriving eco-system. Diversity is desirable, and diversity can create challenges. It is not optional; it simply exists. The goal is not simply to acknowledge diversity but instead to celebrate it, cultivate it and find solidarity in it.

"Unity in diversity' describes a state of togetherness or harmony achieved while acknowledging and valuing individual differences, encompassing a range of cultures, beliefs and backgrounds."

—Wikipedia

We are part of one whole, connected to each other and to all the rest of creation. We can find this place of grace called *unity in diversity* when we remember what Thomas Berry has written:

"The deep Mystery of the Divine is revealed in every being, but in a supreme manner within the comprehensive unity of the whole."

(continued on page 3)

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Eastern Iowa

**Frank Nidey, Vice
Chair**
Founding Partner,
Retired, Nidey Erdahl
Meier & Araguas, PLC

**Marin Noska,
Secretary**
Housing Case Manager,
Willis Dady Homeless
Services

**Suzanne Rubenbauer,
FSPA**
Spiritual Director &
Caregiver

Claire Sagers
Director of Alumni
Engagement, Coe
College

**Hether Stauffacher,
Treasurer**
AVP RE-Consumer
Support Manager,
Cedar Rapids Bank &
Trust



It seems as though we humans have forgotten how to be in healthy relationship with one other. And yet it is in relationship that we thrive. Seeking inspiration I happened upon this definition of spirituality from physicians studying the role of spirituality in human wellbeing:

"Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred."

—David Addiss, MD, MPH,
in *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 2018

Once again I am reminded that our healthy spirituality heals, unites and helps us to be resilient. So in times like these what is needed from a spirituality center like Prairiewoods?

First, help create new stories. Spirituality is about our stories and our experience. One story that is essential is the story of our interconnectedness. There is a myth of the heroic individual life that is harming all of us. Here we offer innumerable opportunities to experience the truth of our interdependence and our deep desire for connection. We must come together to examine our stories and create new ones together.

We will need to build our resilience to live in a world of complex truths and hold conflict that is generative. Complexity, paradox, tension are sisters. Tension can be and often is the doorway to transformation. Transformation happens in the turbulent space between what is and what could be. But we must stay in it.

Second, be relentless in building healing bridges to belonging. John A. Powell describes the difference between breaking and bridging:

"Across our communities, regions, states, we are witnessing increased anxiety, much of it related to an increase in a perceived 'Other.' ... Tapping into it can take us in two directions: towards breaking where we turn inward, only to what we know and who we know. This path leads ultimately to a politics of isolation. The other direction is bridging, where we turn outwardly to connect and explicitly work with other groups and seek ways to build common ground. This path ultimately takes us towards belonging and empathy."

At Prairiewoods, we believe in a world where all belong. We honor everyone as part of the rich fabric of life and work towards a future that fosters empathy, mutuality and reciprocity. This is the heart of our ecological spirituality.

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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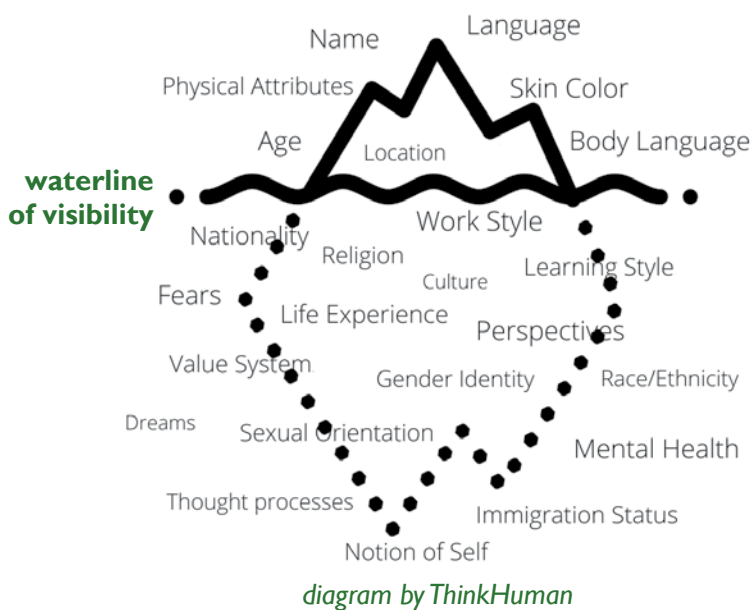


(continued from page 1)

How shall we live into this truth?

First, let's widen our lens. Often when we speak about diversity we are really speaking about race or gender identity. But let's consider all the ways that we experience diversity. Each of us brings a unique constellation of characteristics and identities. This creates innumerable opportunities to connect and build relationships. Yet the data shows that we are increasingly isolated into one-dimensional bubbles. Couple that with our American myth of the heroic individual and we have created the recipe for isolation and fear.

IDENTITY ICEBERG



How do we contribute to disunity?

When we experience the unknown and the uncertain, we often experience fear. When we are afraid, we seek safety—in the known and predictable. In times like these when so much seems unpredictable, it is easy to stay with the comfortable—the people we know, the places we know, the stories we have always heard.

When we reject the value of diversity we begin to identify those who are “other than us” as separate, often less valuable or important than we are. We create the binary universe of us and them. As my new friend Rector John Greve stated so clearly the other day— “When it is 'them,' we make laws and rules. When it is 'us,' we find solutions.”

How shall we foster unity?

First, let's grow our capacity for the binding agents of love and compassion. Let us actively see points of connection through shared experience and shared concerns. Then build our resilience so that we are able to live into the tension that is inherent in diverse communities.

Be curious and seek to explore. Recognize that all identities and how we view them are socially constructed. They are often built on stories, generalizations and stereotypes. We (and most often the dominant group) define the value of an identity. Is it desirable or do we attach a stigma? Do we use it to create boundaries and walls? Instead, recognize the value of mutuality and reciprocity as an antidote to fear.

Do this ... choose to wonder, listen to a story, build a bridge, practice loving kindness.

Here are four possibilities to consider:

1. John A. Powell encourages us to:

"Extend our attention and build connections across boundaries of difference. The heart of bridging is to listen to and learn from and about the person perceived as different or even as 'the other.' Hear their story not to confirm their facts or perspective but to affirm their humanity. Centering stories and narratives and widening our circle of concern. You don't need to give up your identity. Increasing empathy, compassion and common ground erases lines drawn between groups on the basis of fear."

2. Valerie Kaur, a Sikh civil right activist, encourages us:

"Seeing no stranger begins in wonder. It is to look upon the face of anyone and choose to say: You are a part of me I do not yet know. Wonder is the wellspring for love. Who we wonder about determines whose stories we hear and whose joy and pain we share ... When a critical mass of people come together to wonder about one another, grieve with one another, and fight with and for one another, we begin to build the solidarity needed for collective liberation and transformation—a solidarity rooted in love."

Engage in deep listening

3. David Brooks, in his book *How to Know a Person*, encourages us to “have persistent curiosity about others ... and have an explorer's heart.” This practice of deep listening, including asking better questions will lead to deeper, richer relationship possibilities. If you are stuck when it comes to thinking up questions, try some of the questions the National Public Housing Museum included in their 36 Questions for Civic Love project (nphm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CivicLove_Toolkit_English.pdf).

4. Engage in a LovingKindness Meditation, and each day widen the circle of those you include. (Practice this beautiful ancient meditation at youtu.be/sz7cpV7ERsM?si=65gJNYOqDTBIhyhA)

It can be easy to feel overwhelmed. To feel that the space between us is too wide to cross. Begin with one action, collaborate with others. You are not alone and you need not struggle alone. Perhaps you are one question away from a greater unity in diversity.

—Leslie Wright

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

A Spring Day in the Garden & Woods Retreat (in person)

Friday, May 16, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, May 17, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Scott Koepke & Aaron Brewer

Research affirms that the act of gardening is therapeutic. In addition to producing food and beauty, gardens grow healthier minds and social networks. From soil to soul, this inspirational, fun workshop offers food for thought on how nurturing botanical life can heal our mental and physical challenges. We learn to build from the ground up to harvest nutrition and cultivate hope, peace and strength for the next generation. Enjoy a beautiful overnight retreat in the garden with reflective, hands-on learning. We'll experience a variety of mindful ecological experiences, including:

- Garden Bridge Outreach, a 90-minute interactive garden life-skill education service that helps people develop a garden
- deepening our understanding of food as common ground in a polarized world
- the lessons of compost for transforming old life into new

We will also learn about establishing and caring for a pollinator garden and basic tree identification.

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

Commuter Fee: \$100 includes sessions and Saturday lunch (*Scholarships are available.*)

Exploring Traditional Chinese Meditative, Healing & Martial Arts Retreat (in person)

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

Facilitator: Gerry Hopkins



Chinese culture has been influenced by Daoist philosophy, which emphasizes living in alignment with nature. To that end, Daoist practice encourages us to live simply, remain positive, nourish our body and mind, and not waste our energy. Retreatants will be introduced to basic Neidan, Qigong and Tai Chi practices. Neidan are Daoist meditation techniques.

Qigong are healthy practices involving movement, visualization and focus on breathing. Tai Chi is a martial art that emphasizes maintaining balance while neutralizing threat. Following an introduction into these methods, we will have the opportunity to practice them through various exercises and situations. Our goal will be to develop a sustainable practice for negotiating life's difficulties. We also will be introduced to and gifted with various types of tea that promote health and wellbeing.

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

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



The Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreats (in person)

June: Sunday, June 8, 5 p.m.–Saturday, June 14, 1 p.m.

July: Sunday, July 6, 5 p.m.–Saturday, July 12, 1 p.m.

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

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? 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 discern, notice and 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, and offer insight into that direction. 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. Come re-establish and remember the deep connection we share with all of Creation as we listen together to the great silence.

Fee: \$525 includes lodging, meals and daily spiritual direction (*Lodgers only, please.*)



Retreat Brochure Available!

To help you prepare for the months ahead, Prairiewoods has created a

six-month Retreat Brochure for July through December 2025. It includes details on the retreats we will host in the next six months. To download a printable copy, visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats. If you would like us to mail you a copy, please send your mailing address to alewis@prairiewoods.org.

Cultivating Peace through Mindfulness & Social Emotional Behavioral Support Retreats (in person)

Course 1: Monday, June 16, 1 p.m.–Wednesday, June 18, 1 p.m.

Course 2: Wednesday, June 18, 1 p.m.–Friday, June 20, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Sarah Montgomery & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Are you a peaceful teacher? Would you like to cultivate more peace in your daily life? In this one-hour credit course, learn practical, simple ways you can press pause, re-center, and intentionally promote a peaceful presence that will have ripple effects for your family, students and the world.



Through practices of mindfulness, social emotional behavioral support, self-compassion and neuroscience, we'll begin to explore peaceful applications in our own lives to build resiliency, hope, and curiosity leading to health and wellbeing. These courses provide educators and any school or university staff or administrator with research-based theory, collaborative design and opportunities to practice. The retreat-like courses will occur indoors and outdoors on the beautifully supportive and restorative 67 acres of Prairiewoods. Optional opportunities such as massage, yoga, tai chi and sounding will also be available. Overnight lodging is strongly encouraged. A text, *Practicing Presence*, will be used to support course aims. Register for these courses through both Grant Wood AEA and Prairiewoods. Course 1 is a prerequisite for Course 2.

Fee: \$100 per credit hour (plus \$35 paid to Grant Wood AEA) includes sessions, lodging, and daily breakfast and lunch (*Lodging is strongly encouraged.*)

Commuter Fee: \$75 per credit hour (plus \$35 paid to Grant Wood AEA) includes sessions and daily lunch

Cultivating an Awakened Brain Retreat (in person)

Follow-up to Spirituality in the 21st Century
Friday, June 20, 6 p.m.–Saturday, June 21, 4 p.m. (or stay through Sunday morning with optional Saturday evening mindfulness practices)

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Leslie Schwarting

How do you cultivate an awakened brain? Let's practice relinquishing our achievement-focused activities, being mindful and tuning into the world to turn down the noise, readying our awareness for fresh insights. Through chanting, prayer, creative expression, movement, walks in nature, meditation and many other modalities, we will learn how easy it is to step away from the daily buzz of life to re-center and reconnect with each other, our minds, our hearts and Earth. Why does this matter? Because life is beckoning us forward with an invitation to experience it fully. We will spend time with content from the book *The*



Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and our Quest for an Inspired Life by Spirituality in the 21st Century speaker Dr. Lisa Miller. With ample time for reflection, tranquility and practice, this retreat will be especially powerful if you attend Spirituality in the 21st Century (May 5 or 6), however, attendance is not required to participate in this retreat.

Friday–Saturday Fee: \$205 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Friday–Sunday Fee: \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday breakfast

Commuter Fee: \$175 includes sessions and Saturday lunch

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

Friday, June 27, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, June 28, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Join a wonderful learning community dedicated to embracing food as a pathway to peace. Summer takes us out to farmer's markets, to garden plots, to potted veggies on the deck. Sense summer's call to transform our relationship with self, others and Earth through our personal food choices. Guided by environmentalists, mystics, poets and contemporary sages, we'll tend resources for summer produce near and dear to us. We'll deepen our relationships with nature through our food choices, engaging in creative acts such as writing and walking in the Prairiewoods gardens. Bring your favorite healthy recipes of locally grown foods to share as we gather around the summer table in peace and relationship. **Fee:** \$150 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Friday dinner through Saturday lunch
Commuter Fee: \$100 includes sessions, Friday dinner and Saturday lunch



Save the Date!

for these retreats in July and August:

Navigating Transitions Retreat (in person) with Jill Saunders & Leslie Schwarting, Friday, July 25–Sunday, July 27 (*Choose the length of retreat that works for you!*)

Active Hope for Troubling Times Retreat (in person) with Kathleen Rude, Friday, Aug. 1–Sunday, Aug. 3

Becoming the Elder Tree: Purpose in the Second Half of Life Retreat (in person) with Dr. Thomas Dean & Dr. Chris Johnson, Friday, Aug. 15–Sunday, Aug. 17

Vocal Empowerment Retreat (in person) with Mary Jane Knight, Saturday, Aug. 23 (*or come early and add optional Friday night lodging*)

Garden Party: Growing Our Roots



PRAIRIEWOODS garden party GROWING OUR ROOTS

Saturday, June 7, 5–8 p.m., at Prairiewoods

Join us at our annual *Garden Party fundraiser* on *Saturday, June 7*, for a night of music, food, and nature!

You Can Make A Difference

All of the proceeds from this event 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 the produce is harvested from the gardens, it's donated to local food pantries that serve those facing food insecurity in our community. This past year we were thrilled to be able to partner with the Hiawatha Public Library to launch a new food pantry that is open seven days a week. Help us to continue our support of local food pantries through this fun event!

We Have Lots of Fun Things Planned for Our Event

New this year! A Flower Bar where you can make a beautiful bouquet to take home for \$30!

Don't miss our silent auction with some fantastic items that you'll want to bid on.

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 the 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 Nature Playscape and Four Winds Food Forest, our food pantry gardens and more. If walking isn't your thing, we'll also offer rides on our ATV. If you visit all of the ecological and spiritual features, we'll put your name in for a fantastic drawing!

To register for our Garden Party or to donate, visit 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!



Prairiewoods Nature Arrangements (in person)
Thursdays, beginning May 1,
8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Facilitators: Prairiewoods outdoors team

Each month May–December 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 67 acres of woods and prairie. Arrangements will be available for pickup on the first Thursday of each month (May–December) during business hours.

Fee: \$160 for 8 monthly bouquets



Day of Self Renewal (in person)
Now offered on Fridays, too!
Thursdays, May 1 & June 5;
Monday, May 12; &
Fridays, May 23 & June 27;
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 meditation practices, a private guest room for the day, 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, spiritual arts, mindfulness, 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, group meditation practices, private guest room for the day and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

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

Thursdays, May 1 & June 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)

Thursdays, May 1 & June 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

Healthy Snacking for Kids: A Hands-On Workshop for Parents (in person)

Saturday, May 3, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Sarah Waldorf

Join us for a fun and interactive workshop that simplifies healthy eating for kids! Connect with like-minded parents, gain practical nutrition tips, and discover kid-approved snack ideas that are both nutritious and delicious. Learn the essentials of childhood nutrition, hear about stress-free strategies for picky eaters and watch a live snack-making demo. Participate in hands-on snack prep

and take home kid-friendly snacks you create. Plus, receive an exclusive Healthy Lunch Box Prep Guide to make mealtime even easier!

Fee: \$25

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (in person)

Saturdays, May 3 & June 28,
10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA

LovingKindness Meditation offers a daily practice to assist us in being compassionate to ourselves, others and all of creation. Fostering compassion and kindness instead of judgment, anxiety and fearful reaction, this short daily practice can assist us in creating a world environment that brings forth compassion and creative life-giving choices. This program includes presentation, practice and discussion.

Fee: \$10

World Labyrinth Day: Walk as One at 1 (in person)

Saturday, May 3, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Self-guided

Join thousands of people participating in the 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 take part. If you are new to walking, simple instructions will be available near our outdoor labyrinth to guide you. 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. The labyrinth is always open

sunup to sundown. All are welcome, and registration is not required.

Fee: Free

Morning Hatha Yoga (in person)
Sundays, May 4–18 & June 1–29,
9–10 a.m.

Facilitator: Sarah Cram Driscoll

Join us on the land for outdoor Morning Hatha Yoga on Sunday mornings! Start your day with gentle movement and deep breathing in nature. Together we will bring energy and balance to our bodies and minds. This is a beginner-friendly practice to awaken and restore. Please bring a yoga mat, a water bottle and an open heart. No experience is needed—just come as you are! Let's stretch, breathe and move together in the fresh morning air. Registration is appreciated.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 per class

The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality & Our Quest for an Inspired Life (hybrid)

Monday, May 5, 6–8:15 p.m.;

Tuesday, May 6, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.;

or Tuesday, May 6, 6–8:15 p.m.

Facilitator: Lisa Miller, PhD

Location: First Lutheran Church

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the Department of Health and Human Services has identified



spirituality as one of the eight key components of overall wellness. Author and researcher Lisa Miller, PhD, is one of the nation's leading neuroscience researchers about the impact that spirituality can have on our mental wellbeing. Join Prairiewoods for our annual Spirituality in the 21st Century event, which will combine cutting-edge science with direct tools for application for people from all walks of life as we connect spirituality to mental health. **Fee:** \$25 for evening sessions, \$40 for Tuesday morning session (includes lunch), \$10 for students

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays, May 5, May 19, June 2 & June 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

Zumba with Julio (in person)

Wednesdays, May 7–June 4 & June 18–25, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Julio Vera

Zumba is a high-energy fitness class that combines dance and aerobic exercises set to upbeat Latin and international music. It's a fun, full-body workout suitable for all fitness levels, blending easy-to-follow choreography with cardio, muscle conditioning and balance. It's perfect for anyone looking to stay active while having a great time!

Fee: \$10 per session

Terra Divina: A Spiritual Practice of Engaging with Earth (in person)

Sundays, May 11 & June 22,
3–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Stephanie Heifner

Like lectio divina is a sacred reading of text, terra divina is a sacred reading of Earth—the “Book of Creation.” With an attitude of wonder and with all of our senses, we engage in conversation with nature. We begin with a brief conversation, sharing in learning about the season we are in. We learn the steps of terra divina and then wander independently as we practice for about 40 minutes. We conclude by gathering as a group, sharing bread and herbal tea, and talking about our experiences.

Fee: \$15

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon: **Sunday, May 11, 6:30–8:30 p.m.;** **& Wednesday, June 11, 7–9 p.m.**

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience: **Monday, May 12, 2:30–3:45 p.m.**

Facilitator: Emelia Sautter

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.

Fee: \$25 for longer moon walks, \$20 for shorter afternoon experience

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

Mondays, May 12 & June 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

Awaken Your Creativity through Watercolor (in person)

Tuesdays, May 13 & June 17, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Barb Thompson

Join a hands-on, beginner's painting workshop that includes a tracing sheet, step-by-step instructions and an example to reference as we paint, making it perfect for beginners. Class starts with a few watercolor exercises and a demonstration of the project. Then we will work at our own pace to paint an iris in May and a bumblebee in June. This is recommended for ages 8–100. Simply bring a positive attitude, ready to learn a new skill!

Fee: \$50 includes all art supplies



Spring into Action: Preparing Your Garden for Permaculture (in person)

Tuesday, May 13, 1–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes

Discover how to prepare your spring garden using sustainable and regenerative permaculture techniques! This hands-on workshop is perfect for gardeners of all levels who want to create thriving, lower-maintenance, eco-friendly planting beds. You'll learn how to assess and improve soil health, plan your garden layout for maximum yield and biodiversity, and implement water-saving strategies. Immerse yourself in the Green Prairie Garden, where we have been practicing permaculture for over six years and have several types of beds. Topics will include composting, mulching and using organic fertilizers to nourish your soil naturally; choosing the right plants for your space, climate and microclimates; companion planting and other strategies for pest control and enhanced growth; and simple methods for creating a self-sustaining ecosystem. Join us to learn ideas for cultivating a garden that works with nature—not against it—setting the stage for a productive and beautiful growing season. Bring your questions, creativity and a love for Earth!

Fee: Free-will offering

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Wednesdays, May 14 & June 18, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Ali Yoka & 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. 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

Earth-Friendly Lawn Care (in person)

Monday, May 19, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Phil Pfister

Can you have a great looking, neighbor-pleasing lawn and still be Earth-friendly? Yes! Join Linn County Master Gardener Phil Pfister as we explore various techniques used to maintain an Earth-friendly lawn, including organic options and the responsible use of chemicals.

Fee: Free-will offering

An Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods (in person)

Thursdays, May 22 & June 19, 5–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Leave your devices behind and swap screen time for real-time connection with others. This is 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 bring a book and simply be in the presence of others! Come and go as you please, as there will not be a formal program.

Fee: \$5 includes soup and salad

Glycerin Soap & Lotion Workshop (in person)

Fridays, May 23 & June 27, 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Sandy Rosenberger

In this fun-filled workshop, we'll learn the basics of melt-and-pour soapmaking with a glycerin soap base made without hard detergents. We'll also make a beautiful moisturizing glycerin lotion. Both the soap and lotion can be

scented with either fragrance oils or essential oils that will be provided. **Fee:** \$10 includes all materials



It's All About the Watering! (in person)

Tuesday, June 3, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Phil Pfister

It's been said that more plants are killed by overwatering than underwatering. Join Linn County Master Gardener Phil Pfister as we discuss when and how to water seedlings, transplants, containers, yards and gardens. We'll discuss watering under a variety of conditions that most gardeners will encounter. The techniques will include indoor and outdoor conditions.

Fee: Free-will offering

Creek Cleanup in Honor of Sister Water & The Canticle of the Creatures (in person)

Friday, June 13, 9–11 a.m.

Facilitator: Aaron Brewer

Celebrate the life-giving force of water as depicted in St. Francis of Assisi's *The Canticle of the Creatures*, in which Sister Water is praised for her clarity, humility and preciousness. Together, we will care for creation by cleaning up our local creek, reflecting on our connection to nature and giving thanks for the gift of water. All are welcome, so feel free to bring your family, friends or community group for this fun morning of service! Please wear comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes and bring a reusable water bottle, hat and sunscreen. Gloves and garbage bags will be provided. Registration is not required.

Fee: Free

Our Guests Say It Best!

“In a world filled with uncertainty and division, it is refreshing to know there is a place like Prairiewoods. The entire facility and staff offer a ray of hope to all who visit.”

—Mark & Pat M.

“It's hard to find the words. I do not currently practice a religion, but I am very spiritual and I felt at home. The way the spiritual message is blended into the materials, presentation and décor was comforting, reassuring and helped me realize my day-to-day life could benefit from more spiritual presence.”

—Ecological Spirituality Retreat participant

Visual Storytelling: Nature through Your Lens (in person)

Saturday, June 28, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Facilitator: Donald Quintana

Join Donald Quintana, professional conservation visual storyteller, for this one-day immersive workshop on visual storytelling! Learn the seven essential images that transform photos into compelling narratives. With hands-on instruction, group discussions and in-the-field practice, we'll develop skills to craft powerful stories. Perfect for journalists, social media creators or anyone wanting to elevate their storytelling. Capture more than just images—capture memories!

Fee: \$135 (or \$205 with Friday lodging)



Save the Date!

for this upcoming program:

Write So Far: Giving Voice to Your Spiritual Journey (in person)

with Cheryl Conklin; Saturdays; Aug. 16, Aug. 23, Sept. 6, Sept. 13 & Sept. 27; 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; May 1–22, May 29–June 30; 9:30–10:30 a.m. (gentle yoga) & 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)

Facilitator: Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment of Prairiewoods.

Fee: \$120 for eleven classes, \$72 for six classes, \$15 for single class



Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, May 1–June 26, 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; May 1, May 15, June 5 & June 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

Mindfulness at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays, May 5–19 & June 2–30, 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 (Zoom)

first Wednesdays, May 7 & June 4, 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

Engage in communal reflection on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin, Ilia Delio and similar deep thinkers.

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second & fourth Thursdays; May 8, May 22, June 12 (at an alternate location) & June 26; 4–5:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linzy Martin

Join reflective men in honest conversation about life changes.

Fee: Free-will offering

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, May 13 & June 10, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, May 28 & June 25, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity.

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; May 13, May 27, June 10 & June 24; 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

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

For Children: second Wednesdays, May 14 & June 11, 5:30–7 p.m.

For Adults: third Wednesdays, May 21 & June 18, 5:30–7 p.m.

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

Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark in monthly grief groups.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the children's group)

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery (in person)

Saturday, May 31, & Sunday, June 29, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Come for a lively drum circle—we'll have you drumming in no time!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but this is free for all to enjoy)

News From the Land

Prairiewoods is preparing for the upcoming growing season in many ways.

Seeding new growth.

In an effort to increase plant and animal biodiversity, volunteers joined Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, this February in overseeding the southwest prairie. We will manage this area with occasional mowing to give the new seeds a chance to germinate and outcompete the brome grass that is present, creating beautiful tallgrass prairies for visitors and passersby to enjoy.



Growing good food in a sustainable way.

Prairiewoods volunteers will be working on a new project this year: agrivoltaics, the process of growing flowers and vegetables under and around solar panels. This practice benefits food production and renewable energy generation. This project will start with one solar array growing shade-tolerant plants to utilize this empty space and improve the productivity of the arrays, providing a cooling effect. We are excited to use this practice, which is growing in popularity, to work toward sustainable land utilization and set an example of what is possible.



Restoring the woodlands.

Since losing 1,200 trees in the 2020 derecho, Prairiewoods has planted more than 700 tree seedlings. In April Prairiewoods partnered with the Trees Forever Campus Canopy program. With the help of volunteers, we planted 35 new trees in the riparian woodlands.

We continue to work on raising the tree canopy to provide a thriving wildlife sanctuary with diverse plant material. Work has continued on controlling woody invasive species in our woods. With the canopy opened up, honeysuckle, multiflora rose and autumn olive have begun to thrive in our wooded areas, making for unbalanced habitats. By hand cutting and forestry mowing, we have been able to reduce these heavy seed-producing, low-nutrient ecosystem killers to make room for native bare-root trees and native flowers and grasses.

You can help!

Volunteers are always welcome to lend a hand and learn and share their talents in the garden on Tuesday and Friday mornings or on the land on Wednesdays. We hope you'll join us!



Volunteer Opportunities

We are always looking for volunteers to serve at Prairiewoods. Some of our opportunities include:

Office & Hospitality: If you are personable and friendly, we could use your help in our front office! You would work on weekends or weeknight evenings to greet guests, answer phone calls, field guest questions, collect program fees, process Gift Shop purchases and help with other office duties as needed. This is a great opportunity to interact with people and extend hospitality at Prairiewoods!

Outdoors: If you're passionate about the environment or love to spend time in nature, you would feel right at home as an outdoor volunteer. At Prairiewoods, we take land care to heart. As an outdoor volunteer, you would help keep our 67 acres of woods and prairie beautiful, ecologically healthy and productive. You can help with trail maintenance, prairie or woodland restoration, lawn mowing and general maintenance.

Garden: Do you love to get your hands in the soil? Our extensive gardens include a huge vegetable garden, the Four Winds Food Forest, an herb garden and multiple flower beds. You would help plant, weed or harvest.

Finance Committee: The Prairiewoods Finance Committee oversees funding and spending. Specifically, the committee is responsible for approving the annual budget and recommending it to the full board for adoption, monitoring monthly financial statements, and overseeing financial reporting. Time required would be a one-hour virtual meeting each month.

If you're interested in any of these opportunities, please contact Sandy Rosenberger at 319-395-6700, ext. 216, or srosenberger@prairiewoods.org.

Saying Goodbye & Thanks to Our Marketing Intern

This semester, we've had the extreme pleasure of working with a hard-working senior in the marketing department at Mount Mercy University. Grace Conway has served as our marketing intern, helping with projects like market trend research, photography and videography, graphic design and event planning. She has been inquisitive and ready to jump in to any project at a moment's notice. We're so grateful for Grace's time here and can't wait to see what she does next!

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 "PrairiewoodsFSC" on:



Support
Prairiewoods
at our annual
Garden Party
fundraiser!



PRAIRIEWOODS
garden party
GROWING OUR ROOTS



Saturday, June 7,
5–8 p.m.
See page 6 for details.

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Prairiewoods: A Place of Healing Here Are Just a Few Ways Healing Happens at Prairiewoods

On a recent Monday evening, a small group listened to a short reading about the practice of meditation and then sat in silence for 30 minutes. All of us in the group had found our way there by our own unique path. Some had studied Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction at Prairiewoods. Some had studied in other places using other models for meditation. Some were practicing centering prayer. Some were new to meditation and were taking to it quite comfortably. Some had a decades-long practice. One person was sitting in silence for their first time ever!

As the time of silence came to an end, the Spirit began to move around the room, calling on each to share what was in our heart, what was on our mind. A young woman shared how she appreciated being a part of the group as she continued to grieve the loss of her mother. The two bereavement counselors who participate offered their words of wisdom—opening the door for others to share about our own experiences of grief. We brought up the loneliness, the need to find someone to talk to, the ache for something as simple as a hug. The sharing lasted as long as the sitting—by the time of departure there was laughter, there were hugs, there was joy found in shared sorrow.

Healing happens at Prairiewoods.

Sister Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA, visited on a Saturday morning to offer the ancient guided practice of LovingKindness. A circle of mostly strangers followed her guidance. As we passed through each stage of the practice (from ourselves, to someone for whom we felt grateful, to someone with whom we have a “neutral” relationship, to someone we experience as difficult or threatening, and finally, to all beings on the planet) we offered:

- May (this being) be free from danger.
- May (this being) be happy.
- May (this being) be healthy.
- May (this being) live with ease.

We looked at each other around the circle and recognized that something significant had happened for each of us there. We felt calm and peaceful, we felt closer to the people for whom we prayed. We felt closer to one another. We felt empowered that even when the world around us feels outside our control, there is something we can do.

Healing happens at Prairiewoods.

(continued on page 3)



PRAIRIEWOODS STAFF

Mariah Andrews
Food Service Director

Aaron Brewer
Land Sustainability
Coordinator

Joann Gehling, FSPA
Holistic Services,
Spiritual Director

Trace Harshman
Housekeeper

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

Robert Hogg
Program Assistant

Ann Jackson, PBVM
Spiritual Services
Coordinator, Spiritual
Director & Retreat
Facilitator

Christine Kirpes
Garden Coordinator

Andi Lewis
Marketing Coordinator

Erik Meggers
Maintenance Coordinator

Sandy Rosenberger
Development
Coordinator

Nancy Schrimper
Office Administrator

Leslie Schwarting
Spiritual Director &
Retreat Facilitator

Jean Sullivan
Outreach, Engagement &
Hospitality Coordinator

Julio Vera
Massage Therapist

Lucille Winnike, FSPA
Retreats, Spiritual
Director

Leslie Wright
Director

Ali Yoka
Chef & Kitchen Manager




I write this in spring, when the world is greening and the birds are singing. It is time to watch seeds sprouting and admire the new babies in the woods, ponds and prairies. It is a special time of renewal for Prairiewoods as well. When you read this note we will have begun our 30th year! It is a time for celebrating our roots and spreading our branches. Inspired by Grandmother Oak, we will lean into the work of the mother tree. We will foster new growth, strengthen community, share our resources and cultivate resilience. You will begin to see new growth in a variety of ways over the coming year. The first example is our new logo, overall look and color scheme. You will see that we are still rooted in images of creation like our trees and colors that speak about our ecological spirituality.

The second example of new growth is our refreshed website, which we will launch in the coming weeks. It has been almost a decade since the old website was created. Much has changed since then. This updated site is easier to navigate and highly searchable so that more people can find us as they seek a place of rest and renewal. We have carried forward many of the elements of the old website—beautiful photos and descriptions of the land and facilities. But you will notice the addition of video and integrated calendars for some of our practitioners.

This whole year will be dedicated to honoring the history and the vision of the foundresses and listening to the call of the Source of All Being, encouraging us to continue the journey. We hope you will join us as we celebrate the journey so far and the journey yet to come!

Peace and all good,


Leslie A. Wright



Prairiewoods
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER



Prairiewoods
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

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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(continued from page 1)

A pastor in the first week of sabbatical. A recently divorced mother of two. A pair of sisters. A person recently diagnosed with the beginnings of dementia. A caregiver here for time away from their 24/7 schedule. These are the people who come to a Day of Self Renewal. We gather first thing in the morning, sometimes rushing, often exhausted at 8:30 a.m. Some have been here before and know generally what to expect, others just know that the description sounded really good and they found a way to fit it into their busy schedule. A meditative reading, a tour and we are off, following a loose schedule of opportunities. Many head right outdoors to the land, to the trails, to a favorite spot at Grandmother Oak or for a walk around the labyrinth. Others curl up with a journal and a cup of tea on the couch in front of the fireplace, or head to a guest room for a nap. The care provided by the practitioners helps lift us up a bit—yoga, massage, reflexology, healing touch for our bodies—singing bowls sound bath for relaxation, spiritual direction for sorting out just where we are and where we want to go on our spiritual journey. We return at 4 p.m. to reflect on the day; some are very calm and relaxed, others are excited following some epiphany experienced during the day. We are all grateful for the re-set and ready to return home with our resilience renewed.

Healing happens at Prairiewoods.



“Our relationship to the land and to each other (needs to be healed). The current transactional nature of these relationships is harmful for all parties involved. We need to listen to each other more and be less ego-driven.”

—Cleo Sullivan, TRIO Student Support Services Advisor at Coe College

“I would like for us to heal the way we walk upon the Earth and with each other. This would offer a way to mend the interconnectedness of the Holy One, creation and humanity. The breath and love of God would truly be honored.”

—Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA, Spiritual Director & Caregiver

Come out to Prairiewoods, we said. How long can you stay? And they came: staff from a local human service agency. Bright and early they arrived, with some of the largest coffees you can imagine. They sat together and chatted, taste-testing our blueberry muffins fresh out of the oven. We started with education, reviewing the impact of stress on our bodies, our minds and our spirits. They shared with one another, comparing their experiences. From there they scattered, some to our gardens with a tour by Sandy Rosenberger, some to our Art Room for a class by Andi Lewis on the meditative practice of drawing mandalas. A few stayed back at the Center and received chair massages from Julio Vera. And a few hearty souls made the trek out to Grandmother Oak, passing through prairie and woods along the way. Several added a walk around the labyrinth to their trip. They returned for some time to contribute to a large coloring project celebrating the anniversary of Saint Francis' Canticle to Brother Sun and Sister Moon. All of this before noon! They departed smiling and laughing, ready to move on with their day.

Healing happens at Prairiewoods.

—Rev. Jean Sullivan

What needs to be healed?

To heal means to restore, to make whole. Unitive describes something that promotes or is characterized by unity, union or oneness. It can refer to actions or qualities that tend to bring things together or to a state of wholeness.

We asked members of our community: What needs to be healed?

“Trust is what needs to be healed. Trust in our fellow human beings; trust that the earth will take care of us when we take care of her; trust in our gut intuitions which remind us we are each a vital yet minuscule part of the larger creation calling us together to help bring about more justice, more peace, and more love.”

—Rev. Carin Bringelson, Minister at Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist

“When I first read the prompt, my gut reaction was to say, ‘All of it!’ (Actually, it was more cynical than that: ‘What doesn’t need (to be) healed?’ Chalk my cynicism up to another thing that needs to be healed.) These days, a more modest proposal seems appealing: as I’m realizing the importance of (this) place and (this) time, maybe what needs to be healed most are the fractures that separate us from here and now.”

—Rev. Jonathan Heifner, Lead Pastor at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church

“What needs healing are the hearts hardened by hate and fear of those who look or live differently. We are watching history’s wounds reopen as our society drifts backward, echoing the injustices of the past. Only the medicine of shared humanity can stop the spread—before division becomes our downfall.”

—Anthony Arrington, CDE, CDF, CCA, Top Rank Consulting

“We need to heal the connections between people, the care we invite into our collective consciousness when we connect. Healing work starts with the work of loving, but loving doesn’t happen in a vacuum—we must connect to love and to care for the (sometimes) significantly ‘other.’ We are not alone and we need to heal our sense of loneliness by healing our sense of connection.”

—Anne Dugger, CEO of Catherine McAuley Center

“In our minds and our bodies, we all know our healthcare system does not heal, or leave us feeling more whole. We need safe feeling places with safe feeling, curious healers that allow us to access our own wisdom and nurture the conditions needed by our bodies and minds. Almost always this includes feeling more connected to nature and one another. And every single one of us deserves this type of care.”

—Jen Kardos, Licensed Mental Health Therapist & Certified Functional Medicine Health and Wellness Coach



“In the United States, what needs to be healed are our systems for managing greed. We live in a terribly inequitable society, and it's getting worse. We have been tricked by the ultra wealthy into thinking that what gives our lives meaning, value, and social standing is how much we are able to work for and buy things from rich and powerful corporations. It's time we confront that inequity and restore systems that keep greed in check.”

—Courtney Ball, Community Building Director at Matthew 25



“Healing. Restoring. Understanding.

In a world filled with hurt and pain, it can feel impossible to find a way to heal. But even in the chaos, it's vital that we pause —to rest, to reflect, and to revive ourselves so we can become the best version of who we are meant to be.

We fight. We scream. Yet too often, it feels like no one hears us.

That's why we must take a moment, not just to breathe, but to truly *think*. To understand what we can do better, how we can grow, and how we can help others understand us in return.

Even in the darkness, even in the hurt, we must search for that small token of life—that spark—that leads us to healing from within.

As people of color, as those who have been hurt, as humans, we carry scars from being burned time and time again. But this is *our* time to rise, to dust ourselves off, and to stand strong once more. And when we can't stand alone, we must find those who will lift us up until we can.

Yes, we can heal. The scars may remain, etched beneath the surface, but they do not define us. They remind us.

We will grow brighter. We will rise higher. And we will come back stronger than ever.”

—Briana Clymer, Student at Kirkwood

“One opportunity for restoration is the notion of all or nothing; of this or that. In a society where we quickly divide between them and us, what if we took more time to get curious? What if someone ‘over there’ might agree with us, even on a singular issue, is it not worth the time to find the common ground to move forward? I had a professor once share that it's important to build relationships before we need them. I think this applies with our spouse, our children, our colleagues, our community, and those we might not see eye-to-eye with. Remember that future thought prevents current action, so be present in the moment with people ... they may just surprise you!”

—Nate Klein, Vice President of Education at Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa

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

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

Sunday, July 6, 5 p.m.–Saturday, July 12, 1 p.m. or Sunday, Oct. 5, 5 p.m.–Saturday, Oct. 11, 1 p.m.

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

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? 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 discern, notice and 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, and offer insight into that direction. 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. Come re-establish and remember the deep connection we share with all of Creation as we listen together to the great silence.

Fee: \$525 includes lodging, meals and daily spiritual direction (*Lodgers only, please.*)



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

Friday, July 25, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, July 27, 11 a.m. (Choose the length of retreat that works for you!)

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 the loss of a loved one? Are you searching for some meaning and clarity on what's next? You'll be treated to a path forward that will help you reset and renew as you navigate your transition. Come for a heart-centered, guided journey in which you will:



- learn a map for how to navigate your transition 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 learn how living in alignment with your deepest values can propel you forward

Friday–Sunday Fee: \$255 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 at 5 p.m. Fee: \$225 includes Friday and Saturday sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Friday–Saturday at 5 p.m. Commuter Fee: \$175 includes Friday and Saturday sessions and Saturday lunch

Active Hope for Troubling Times Retreat (in person)

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

Facilitator: Kathleen Rude

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



Retreat Brochure Available!

To help you prepare for the months ahead, Prairiewoods has created a six-month Retreat Brochure for July through December 2025. It includes details on the retreats we will host in the next six months. To download a printable copy, visit Prairiewoods.org. If you would like us to mail you a copy, please send your mailing address to ecospirit@prairiewoods.org.



transformative rituals, healing time on the land, deep sharing, quiet reflection, song, movement and celebration.

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

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

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

Friday, Aug. 15, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Aug. 17, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Dr. Thomas Dean & Dr. Chris Johnson

Envision a second half of life that calls forth your truest self and unique purpose and 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. 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 follows the Circle of Trust® approach developed by Parker Palmer and the organization he cofounded, the Center for Courage and Renewal. This retreat will welcome participants of all ages and at any stage of life.



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

Vocal Empowerment: Reclaim Your Voice, Reclaim Your Self Retreat (in person)

Friday, Aug. 22, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Aug. 23, 4 p.m.

Facilitator: Mary Jane Knight

Come for a heart-centered journey into the power of the human voice—its ability to express deep emotion, release fear and awaken healing vibrations within. It's not just for singers; in fact, it may be especially meaningful for those who feel hesitant to speak or sing or who have been told they "can't" or "shouldn't" use their voice. We'll begin Friday evening around the campfire (weather permitting), sharing stories and songs in a safe, welcoming space. On Saturday, we'll explore how the voice works and experiment with sound and vibration in the body. We'll reflect on our personal relationships with our voices and then use them in



group vocal meditation practice—a powerful alternative to silent meditation, especially for those navigating grief, trauma or PTSD. We'll close with communal singing for healing, connection and empowerment—lifting our voices together through Mary Jane's song-affirmations from her album, celebrating the dignity and power of our own unique voices. Come just for Saturday or join around the campfire and spend the night Friday.

Fee: \$195 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$120 includes sessions and lunch

Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) 18 Retreat (in person)

Fridays; Sept. 26, Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 9, Feb. 6, March 6,

April 3 & May 1; 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

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

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 welcome a supportive structure to explore your heart's desire through prayer and reflection? Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) is an eight-month retreat based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. This retreat will help you explore a number of different kinds of prayer. Emotions, feelings and intellect all help us to sense the movement of 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 the Source of All Being 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.

Fee: \$450 (payable in September 2025 or \$50 a month), plus the cost of monthly spiritual direction

Save the Date!

for these in-person retreats in September:

Pathways to Peace: Food as Relationship Autumn Table Retreat with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, *Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Sept. 6, 4 p.m.*

The Path of Transformation: A Weekend of Reflection, Renewal & Connection Retreat with Shawn Westbrook, *Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 7, 11 a.m.*

An Unplugged Weekend Retreat with Leslie Schwarting, *Friday, Sept. 12, 6 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 14, 11 a.m.*

Resilience & Renewal: A Retreat for Strengthening the Mind & Spirit with Leslie Schwarting; Rev. Jean Sullivan & Ann Jackson, PBVM; *Friday, Sept. 26, 6:30 pm.–Sunday, Sept. 28, 11 a.m.*

Day of Self Renewal (in person)
Thursdays, July 3 & Aug. 7; Monday,
July 14; & Fridays, July 25 & Aug. 22;
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 (such as massage, reflexology, spiritual direction or forest therapy), group meditation practices, a private guest room for the day, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. Registration is required eight days in advance.

Fee: \$110 includes two services, group meditation practices, private guest room for the day and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon: Thursday, July 10, &

Saturday, Aug. 9, 7–9 p.m.

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience: Monday, July 14, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Emelia Sautter

Inspired Ideas: Programming at Prairiewoods (in person)

Tuesday, July 15, 12–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Prairiewoods staff

At the heart of Prairiewoods is a deep commitment to the sacred connection between the Source of All Being, Earth, self and others. As we look to the future, we want to listen—to the land, to the Spirit and to you. We're gathering a focus group of individuals who are passionate about ecospirituality and interested in helping shape new spiritual programming that is rooted in contemplation, ecological awareness and community. If you'd like to contribute to the conversation, we hope you'll join us! Whether you're envisioning new retreats, rituals, workshops or practices that honor Earth and deepen our collective spiritual journey, your insights are welcome. Come with ideas or simply a listening heart. Let's imagine together what's next for this sacred space! Registration is requested.

Fee: Free, includes light lunch

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.

Fee: \$25 for longer moon walks, \$20 for shorter afternoon experience

Circle of Trust® (in person)

Saturday, July 12, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Thomas Dean

Give yourself the time and space to engage your whole, authentic self with courage and support as we explore the questions of your life. We will co-create trustworthy space to listen to the wisdom of our personal inner teacher in community with others. Discerning our authentic selves—our "hidden wholeness," as Parker Palmer calls it—happens when we honor our integrity and pay attention to our inner source of truth. We renew our courageous spirit as we align our inner and outer selves—our soul and role—and journey toward personal and societal wholeness. Each gathering includes poems, stories, songs, artwork and activities from diverse cultures and wisdom traditions, offering opportunities for individual reflection, trustworthy sharing and deep listening. This is open to all, regardless of background or belief.

Fee: \$50

Awaken Your Creativity through Watercolor (in person)

Tuesdays, July 15 & Aug. 12,
9:30–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator:

Barb Thompson
 Join a hands-on, beginner's painting workshop that



includes a tracing sheet, step-by-step instructions and an example to reference as we paint, making it perfect for beginners. Class starts with a few watercolor exercises and a demonstration of the project. Then we will work at our own pace to paint black-eyed Susans in July and a sunflower in August. This is recommended for ages 8–100. Simply bring a positive attitude, ready to learn a new skill!

Fee: \$50 includes all art supplies

Sacred Listening through Mental Illness (in person)

Tuesdays, July 15 & Aug. 19, 6–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Tracy Lees

Be present and pause with others as we listen to how our journey with mental illness speaks to us. This group is for those who live with mental illness, have journeyed through it or support another through their journey. We will ground into the evening with a short meditation and then be invited to share part of our emerging story as we are listened to in a safe space. We will have an open time for asking for what we need, resource sharing, presence or prayer. We will be invited to share a poem, prose or favorite quote that has helped us on our journey. Feel free to come to one or both sessions.

Fee: Free-will offering

Get into the Swing of Summer (in person)

Thursday, July 17, 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes

Join a group effort to touch grass and explore Prairiewoods' grounds during a walk featuring our many swings and benches. You'll experience the beauty and peace of our land and view several great spots for contemplation for when you return on your own. This will be an outdoor program; participants must be able to walk over uneven terrain.

Fee: \$10

What Is This Mindfulness Stuff All About? (in person)

Tuesdays; July 22, Aug. 5, Aug. 19 & Sept. 2; 5–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ann Jackson, PBVM

Just what is mindfulness and how might it be of use? These four gentle

evenings will offer brief introductions to mindfulness and self-compassion and lots of reflective invitations to pay attention to where in the body we may be holding our emotions. Mindful meditation practices help us sense shifts that occur within and help us to make choices for a healthier life. Mindfully spending time in nature prevents health problems such as stress, depression and anxiety and improves our sense of resilience and interpersonal relationships. Come for four weeks to explore and begin to establish a practice of mindfulness.
Fee: \$75 for four-part series

Plant Invaders (in person)
Thursday, July 24, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes
 What makes a plant invasive? How do you identify an invasive plant on your property? Join us on a walk to look for problem plants and learn how to manage them. We'll discuss how to protect native and horticultural plantings, as well as what not to plant. We will share resources to extend our learning about species not found at Prairiewoods. This will be an outdoor program; participants must be able to walk over uneven terrain.
Fee: \$10

Rock Mandala Painting for the Whole Family (in person)
Friday, July 25, 9:30–11 a.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis
 Spend a summer morning 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. You will leave with two painted rocks to adorn your desk or gussy up your garden! This is a fun, relaxing process that can be done by anyone, but it is best for those 10 and over. No experience or artistic skill is necessary.
Fee: \$15 includes all supplies



We See You: Surrender to the Summer (in person)
Thursday, July 31, 8:15 a.m.–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting
 This summer day of rest and reflection is for the weary, the watching, the ones who hold it all together. If you've been wondering when a summer vacation will come for you, look no further. Come away for a day to rest, breathe and reset. This is not a day to plan or produce, but to receive—silence, space, sunlight. Let the noise fall away, even if just for a few hours. We'll create space to lay down what we're carrying, sink into silence and nature, be guided in practices of reflection and release, participate in an optional yoga class, sip iced or hot tea, journal, reconnect with our soul and be reminded that we're not alone. This is a quiet invitation to step away from work, family duties, and all the things that summer brings and be unrushed and unrequired. Come as you are.
Fee: \$75 (or add an optional massage for \$65 or overnight stay for \$50)

Write So Far: Giving Voice to Your Spiritual Journey (in person)
Saturdays; Aug. 16, Aug. 23, Sept. 6, Sept. 13 & Sept. 27; 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Facilitator: Cheryl Conklin
 To paraphrase author and teacher Natalie Goldberg: In knowing who we are and writing from that knowledge, we have a chance to bring the reader deeper into our own heart. Even when that reader is our self. What's more, she says, such writing can teach us the dignity of speaking the truth, allowing that truthful dignity to spread out from the page into our life. We will gain skills and experience in process writing, which can be employed in discerning and expressing our way. These skills and experiences may also strengthen our ability to tolerate and even appreciate the circuitous nature of the journey, deepen our trust in Spirit and expand our capacities to discern the ways in which guide posts and Presence are revealed. Each session builds on the previous.
Fee: \$175 for five-part series (due Aug. 16), includes lunch

Mandala Drawing Workshop (in person)
Friday, Aug. 22, 9:30–10:30 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



In the Cool of the Evening (in person)
Monday, Aug. 25, 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes
 Experience the beauty and peace of Prairiewoods and view several areas that can be enjoyed for rest and contemplation in the shade or during cooler parts of the day. We will tour our labyrinth, Cosmic Walk, woods, Four Winds Food Forest, a few gardens and Dry Creek. This will be an outdoor program; participants must be able to walk over uneven terrain.
Fee: \$10

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
Information Sessions: Tuesday, Aug. 26, or Thursday, Aug. 28, 7–8 p.m. (Zoom)
Eight-Week Series: Mondays, Sept. 8–Nov. 3, 5:30–8 p.m. (in person)
Retreat Day: Sunday, Oct. 26, 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. This eight-week series will cultivate the skill of mindfulness through formal meditation practices and informal integrative practices.
Fee: Free for information sessions, \$400 for eight-week series (just \$100 for those in health & human services!)

Ongoing Programs

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

first Wednesdays, July 2 & Aug. 6, 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

Engage in communal reflection on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin, Ilia Delio and similar deep thinkers.

Fee: Free-will offering

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; July 3–Aug. 28; 9:30–10:30 a.m.

(gentle yoga) & **10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)**

Facilitator: Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment of Prairiewoods.

Fee: \$120 for 11 classes, \$72 for 6 classes, \$15 for single class

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

Thursdays, July 3 & Aug. 7, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Participate in a gentle class involving movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice.

Fee: \$12

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays, July 3 & Aug. 7, & Fridays, July 25 & Aug. 22, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

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

Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, July 3–Aug. 28, 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; July 3, July 17, Aug. 7 & Aug. 21; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz

Slowly explore *New Seeds of Contemplation* by Thomas Merton, one of the great spiritual leaders of our time.

Fee: Free-will offering

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays; July 7, July 21, Aug. 4 & Aug. 18; 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

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

Fee: \$12 per session

Meditation at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays, July 7–Aug. 25, 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

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; July 8, July 22, Aug. 12 & Aug. 26; 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

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

For Children: second Wednesdays, July 9 & Aug. 13, 5:30–7 p.m.

For Adults: third Wednesdays, July 16 & Aug. 20, 5:30–7 p.m.

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

Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark in monthly grief groups.

Fee: Free includes all supplies (and dinner for children's group)

Morning Hatha Yoga (in person)

Sundays, July 13–Aug. 24, 9–10 a.m.

Facilitator: Sarah Cram Driscoll

Join the land for gentle outdoor yoga every Sunday!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

Monday, July 14, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

Let Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the Divine.

Fee: \$10

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery (in person)

Saturday, July 19, & Sunday, Aug. 24, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Come for a lively drum circle—we'll have you drumming in no time!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but free for all to enjoy)

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

fourth Wednesdays, July 23 & Aug. 27, 6–8 p.m.; & second Tuesdays, Aug. 12, 9:30–11:30 a.m. (will meet off site July 8)

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching in the company of new friends as we create items for charity.

Fee: Free

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (in person)

Saturdays, July 26 & Aug. 9, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA

Learn and practice LovingKindness Meditation to help us be compassionate to ourselves, others and all of creation.

Fee: \$10

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Wednesdays, July 30 & Aug. 27, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Ali Yoka & Mariah Andrews

Renew our bodies and refresh our spirits during a lunch celebrating wholesome, fresh food made from scratch.

Fee: \$15 per lunch

We're always adding new opportunities and making updates to our programming. Please check [Prairiewoods.org](https://www.prairiewoods.org) regularly for the most up-to-date information.

Green Community Gardens Help Feed Families

In addition to our own extensive gardens, Prairiewoods rents garden space in our Green Community Gardens to those in our community without their own growing space. This year we have 24 individuals from all around the world who have rented garden plots here. We're so happy to provide garden space for people to grow food for themselves and their families! Many of our gardeners live in apartments and don't have access to land to garden but want to be able to grow healthy produce and ethnically appropriate foods.

This spring we've also done a lot of work in the gardens to continue to improve them. On our United Way Day of Caring on May 8, we had volunteers from United Fire Group and North Risk Partners fill the beds with fresh compost and build wooden frames around the plots.

As the season progresses, it's fun to see all of the beautiful vegetables that each gardener is growing, and many of them also plant flowers in their beds. In the evenings and weekends, we often have parents and their kids all gardening together, and the gardeners give each other gardening tips. Our own Sister Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, will often walk over to the gardens in the evening to check on everyone's progress. We're so thrilled to have such an amazing community of gardeners!



Meet Mariah Andrews: New Food Service Director

Mariah Andrews brings a soulful approach to the culinary experience at Prairiewoods—one rooted in sustainability, creativity and a deep belief in the sacred nature of food.



With more than a decade of experience in food innovation, plant-based cooking and community-building, Mariah sees meals as more than nourishment. "Food has the power to heal, to ground us, and to bring people together in meaningful ways," she says. Her background includes co-founding The Plantiful Pantry, a café and plant-based meal subscription service known for its vibrant dishes like Wicked Dill Pickle Soup, Mexican Street Taco Bowl and Magical Mandarin Salad.

Now at Prairiewoods, Mariah is focused on creating culinary experiences that honor the land, celebrate the seasons, and support the center's mission of peace, transformation and belonging. As she steps into her new role, Mariah is excited to collaborate with the Prairiewoods team to expand the use and preservation of produce grown in the on-site gardens and by local farmers. She also hopes to explore new plant-based menu offerings and meld these into classes and other programs offered here.

Mariah lives in Mount Vernon with her husband, Christian, and is the proud mom of two grown children, Sophia and Gus. She's also a certified yoga teacher, e-cookbook author, and passionate advocate for local farmers, artisans and businesses.

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



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 "PrairiewoodsFSC" on:



Prairiewoods' Values, Inspired by Our Franciscan Roots

During the past year, the Prairiewoods team crafted values statements to guide us in all we do.

Integrative Wellbeing

Nurturing mind, body and spirit through personal and communal transformation and creative expression

Hospitality of Belonging

Offering a space where individuals and communities are welcomed and nourished

Spiritual Encounters

Inviting connectedness and growth for an ever-evolving personal journey

Companioning with All of Creation

Caring for Creation through sustainable and regenerative practices

Relationship Building

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

Prairiewoods Welcomes All

Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center welcomes and affirms people of every race, age, gender identity and expression, marital standing, physical or mental ability, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and sexual orientation or expression. ALL people are beloved and inherently worthy. You belong here.



Prairiewoods

September/October 2025

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Food as Healing

Food as Relationship, Food as Responsibility

At Prairiewoods, we believe that all of life is interconnected. We live in sacred relationship with Earth, each other, and all beings. One of the most tangible ways we express that relationship is through food—how it is grown, how it is prepared, how it is shared.

Food nourishes the body and spirit. It connects us to the land, to community, and to generations past and future. Yet in our modern world, food has become something else: a commodity, an industry, often disconnected from both people and the planet.

(continued on page 3)

Prairiewoods Staff

Mariah Andrews

Food Service Director

Aaron Brewer

Land Care Coordinator

Liberty Danko

Culinary Assistant

Joann Gehling, FSPA

Holistic Services, Spiritual Director

Trace Harshman

Housekeeping

Nancy Hoffman, FSPA

Holistic Services Coordinator,
Outdoor/Land Management

Robert Hogg

Program Assistant

Ann Jackson, PBVM

Spiritual Services Coordinator,
Spiritual Director & Retreat Facilitator

Christine Kirpes

Garden Coordinator

Erik Meggers

Maintenance Coordinator

Nancy Schrimper

Office Administrator

Leslie Schwarting

Spiritual Director & Retreat Facilitator

Jean Sullivan

Hosted Group & Hospitality Coordinator

Julio Vera

Massage Therapist

Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Retreats, Spiritual Director

Leslie Wright

Executive Director

Ali Yoka

Chef & Kitchen Manager



Director's Corner

Join us as we celebrate the journey so far and the journey yet to come!



September and October is a time when we think about the turning of the season – cooler days, changing leaves and harvest in the garden. So what will we harvest this fall? What if what we hoped would grow did not? How will we heal our disappointment – perhaps even disillusionment in the face of unfulfilled expectations? Perhaps it is not your garden that has failed but something closer to your heart or something that feels infinitely larger. This is a time Joanna Macy has accurately named the “Great Unraveling”. And yet there is cause for hope.

“

Do you know how many beautiful things can be seen in a single second? How you can blow up a second like a balloon and fit infinity inside of it?

Andrea Gibson

”

Here at Prairiewoods we are working hard to create opportunities to rest, to heal, and to set new direction. We seek to offer all of you – those navigating their own transitions, changemakers and healers – a place to build resilience for the road ahead.

Join us in September and October for the Season of Creation. It is a time to renew our relationships with self, others, creation and the Source of all Being. We have **more than 20 programs and retreats** during these two months and our celebration will culminate with the Blessing of the Animals. It is a sweet gathering of humans and the creatures that bless them.

May you find your moments of peace and hope in unexpected places this fall.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright

This fall, we invite you to join us in reimagining a different way forward through Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship, an ongoing retreat and practice led by Dr. Christina Campbell of Iowa State University, and Ann Jackson PVBM. Christina teaches that “peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with self, others, and the Earth.” If food is relationship, then how we grow, share, and consume food can either sustain or fracture that wholeness.

At Prairiewoods, this is both a personal and communal practice. It’s woven into every retreat meal, every garden bed, every compost bin. And it’s deeply needed, because our current food system is, in many ways, broken.

What’s Broken in our Food Systems?

Industrial Agriculture & Monoculture Farming

Large-scale industrial farming prioritizes high-volume, single-crop production, often relying on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This approach not only damages soil health and biodiversity—it makes it harder for small farmers to survive. Independent growers using regenerative methods face steeper costs and fewer subsidies.

Laura Krouse of Abbe Hills Farm started one of the first farms in Iowa to offer a CSA and help grow that model across the state. Her work has been about more than growing vegetables; it’s been about teaching others how to build local food capacity through community-supported agriculture.

Her solution? Decentralize. Grow more food closer to home, reconnect communities with local production, and teach ourselves to eat seasonally.

Distribution Challenges for Small Farmers

Even when small farmers grow food sustainably, getting that food to market is its own struggle. Most distribution systems favor large producers and corporate supply chains. Small farmers must handle everything from growing to marketing to distribution themselves.

Inequities in Access

Our food system doesn’t serve everyone equally. Many communities face limited access to fresh, nourishing food. This inequity is twofold:

For consumers, it means fewer healthy, affordable choices.

For small farmers, it means extra hurdles to reaching local buyers and fair markets.

As Drew Erickson of the Linn County Food Systems Council and Rodale Institute Midwest Organic Center puts it: “It takes a village to create a sustainable food system. There are missing pieces all the way up and down the chain—from farmers who want to grow food but can’t get access to land or capital, to building local markets for these products. Where and how we spend our money matters.”

Prairiewoods has been working in partnership with Metro Catholic Outreach and the Hiawatha Library Food Pantry for several years to increase our neighbor’s access to fresh, healthy and local food. Thousands of pounds of produce goes to our partners each season. In addition, Prairiewoods offers affordable garden plots to our neighbors who lack access to land to grow their own food.

Food Waste & Overconsumption

Globally, nearly one-third of all food produced is wasted. At Prairiewoods, we see mindful eating, gratitude, and composting as spiritual practices—ways to honor the resources, labor, and life behind each bite.



What is Prairiewoods Doing to Help Heal the System?

Continue to page 4 to find out!

Prairiewoods' Commitment + Invitation to YOU

Through our own garden-to-table practices, partnerships with local farmers and producers, and plant-forward, seasonal menus, Prairiewoods is committed to helping heal our broken food system.

We especially invite you to try new, seasonal foods. As Laura reminds us:

“We don’t need tomatoes on our sandwiches in January. Wait until July—then it’s the only thing you should have on your sandwich.”

Laura’s bottomline? “Try some new food!”

At Prairiewoods, we prepare creative, plant-forward meals featuring locally sourced ingredients to help guests discover new flavors and make them part of their own repertoire.

We also encourage our broader community to follow the same path. As Laura Krouse recommended on page 3:

- Shop at farmers markets as often as you can.
- Support co-ops like New Pioneer that offer a wide range of local produce, dairy, and specialty products.
- If you’re a retailer or food service organization, work with food hubs that prioritize local sourcing—helping small farmers get their products to market and making fresh, regional food more accessible for all.

And as Laura reminds us, one of the simplest ways to support local food systems is by embracing what’s in season—and letting go of what isn’t. Choosing not to buy tomatoes in January or strawberries in the middle of winter helps reduce unseasonal demand that props up industrial agriculture and long-distance shipping.

Instead, try some new food. Wait for what’s ripe and ready close to home—and enjoy it when it’s at its best. We invite you to join us—not just by attending Pathway to Peace but by reflecting on your own daily choices:

What does it mean for you to be in relationship with your food?
 What small steps might you take today toward food peace?

The Problem	The Healing Pathway	Prairiewoods Practices
Monoculture Farming	Biodiversity & Regenerative Agriculture	Kitchen Garden, Local Sourcing
Overprocessed, Packaged Foods	Whole, Seasonal, Plant-Forward Foods	Plant-Based Menus, Seasonal Recipes
Food Waste & Overconsumption	Mindful Eating, Composting	Kitchen Composting, Portion Awareness
Non-local Monopolies	Local Food Systems/Hubs, Community Co-ops	Partnering with Local Producers
Disconnection from Food	Food as Relationship	Pathway to Peace Retreat, Food Circles
Loss of Food Traditions	Cooking, Preserving, Seed Saving	Cooking Classes, Garden Programming



Pathway to Peace: Food as Relationship

Through guided reflection, garden walks, and shared meals, Pathway to Peace invites participants into deeper awareness of their food choices as part of a peacebuilding practice.

Dr. Christina Campbell introduces three core principles:

- **Contemplate:** Understand how your food is grown, raised, and sourced.
- **Cultivate:** Prepare simple, health-promoting meals. Grow a bit of your own food.
- **Connect:** Support local farmers. Advocate for just food policies in your community.

Our Gardens & Local Food Partners

At Prairiewoods, we grow a portion of our produce in our own gardens and orchard. We also partner directly with these local producers:

- Abbe Hills Farm
- Rhubarb Botanicals
- New Pioneer Co-op

While we are committed to healing the broken food system, we know there is more work to do. We are actively building new relationships and working to increase the number of local farmers and producers we collaborate with over the next few years.

Where in your life do you feel most connected to the food you eat?
What's one small step you can take today to strengthen that relationship?

Faux Guacamole: A Local Twist on a Classic

A great way to use a variety of seasonal produce, from cilantro to zucchini! In fact, zucchini takes the place of avocado in this plant-forward dip that is bright, creamy, and perfect for fall gatherings. (And, yes, our taste testers confirm it really does taste like classic guacamole.)



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large zucchini, cut into smaller pieces
- 2 jalapeño peppers
- 2 tomatillos, peeled and halved
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp cilantro
- ½ tsp kosher salt, divided

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. Spread zucchini, tomatillos, and jalapeños evenly on the cookie sheet. Coat with olive oil and ¼ tsp kosher salt.
3. Bake for 25 minutes, until veggies are slightly charred.
4. Let roasted veggies cool, then remove skins and stems from jalapeños. Chill veggies for 2–3 hours.
5. Add chilled veggies plus remaining ingredients to a food processor. Pulse on low until just blended. Salt to taste.
6. Serve with tortilla chips.



Retreats

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship - Autumn Table

(in person)

Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.– Sept. 6
4 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell, Ann Jackson, PBVM

Harvest is just beginning! Nourishing body and spirit, autumn foods provide possibilities to foster peace at personal, local and global levels. Lean into all the wisdom that this season offers. What can you learn?

- What old ways of thinking about your relationship to food might you release or compost?
- What ways of being might you want to preserve for future days?

Through a series of writing prompts, conversations and a walk in the woods, use this time to deepen your relationship to food and nature. Through contemplation and connection, let's brainstorm how we might prepare for the upcoming winter months, celebrate the holidays with less environmental impact, and create opportunities for personal and planetary health.

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

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes sessions and Saturday lunch

Vocal Empowerment: Reclaim Your Voice, Reclaim Your Self

(in person)

Aug. 22, 6:30 p.m.– Aug. 23
4 p.m.

Facilitator: Mary Jane Knight

Come for a heart-centered journey into the power of the human voice—its ability to express deep emotion, release fear and awaken healing vibrations within. It's not just for singers; in fact, it may be especially meaningful for those who feel hesitant to speak or sing or who have been told they "can't" or "shouldn't" use their voice. Friday evening is for sharing stories. Saturday begins with experiments with sound & vibration and ends with singing for healing. Spend the night in the lodge Friday (with a campfire) or come just for Saturday.

Fee: \$195 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$120 includes sessions and lunch

The Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreat

(in person)

Oct. 5, 5 p.m.– Oct. 11
1 p.m.

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; Lucille Winnike, FSPA; & Joann Gehling, FSPA

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? Awaken and experience a quiet and palpable connection with the Source of All Being as you enter into a deep silence. 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 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. Re-establish and remember the deep connection we share with all of Creation as we listen together to the great silence.

Fee: \$525
Includes lodging, meals and daily spiritual direction
(Lodgers only, please.)

The Path of Transformation: A Weekend of Reflection, Renewal & Connection

(in person)
Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Sept. 7
11 a.m.

Facilitator: Shawn Westbrook

Throughout life, we encounter cycles of change, challenge and renewal. Whether facing transitions, seeking clarity or deepening self-understanding, these moments invite us to step beyond what we know and grow into something greater. This retreat will offer space to explore personal transformation through movement, reflection and connection to the natural world. Using yoga, meditation, eco-therapy practices, ritual and self-inquiry, we will follow a four-stage journey inspired by universal patterns of growth and renewal—from challenge to clarity, uncertainty to insight and separation to wholeness. Rooted in ancient wisdom and practical tools for modern life, this retreat offers a supportive space to navigate personal shifts and move forward with greater purpose.

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

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

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

(in person)
Information Sessions: Tuesday, Aug 26,
and Wednesday, Aug. 28
7–8 p.m. (Zoom)

Eight-Week Series: Mondays, Sept. 8, 15,
22, 29 & Oct. 6, 20, 27 & Nov 3
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

plus extended class Sunday, Oct 26 from
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

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

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



Retreats

Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) 18 Retreat (in person)

Opening and Closing: Sept. 26 & May 8
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (lunch included)

Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 9, Feb. 6, Mar. 6, Apr. 3
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (lunch included)

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

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?

Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) is an eight-month retreat based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Learn to explore:

- kinds of prayer
- the source and presence of the Source of All Being
- the movement of God in your life and the world

Fee: \$450 (payable in September 2025 or \$50 a month), plus the cost of monthly spiritual direction

Resilience & Renewal: A Retreat for Strengthening the Mind & Spirit (in person)

Sept. 26, 6:30 pm.–Sept. 28, 11 a.m.

Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting, Rev. Jean Sullivan, Ann Jackson, PBVM

In the whirlwind of life, resilience can be an anchor that steadies us. Explore what resilience is and how we can strengthen it. Through guided reflection you may learn to:

- use prayer, silence and practices that cultivate deep listening
- explore how resilience is nurtured not through striving, but through surrender,
- trust an awareness of the Divine
- deepen our understanding of the neuroscience of resilience
- explore practices to help us determine what we need
- enjoy guided meditations, contemplative prayer and singing bowls for renewal

This is an invitation to step away from the noise, reconnect with our inner wisdom and cultivate tools that can help us thrive. Whether we seek healing, clarity or simply space to breathe, we will leave with a renewed sense of strength, peace and presence.

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

Commuter Fee: \$195 includes sessions and Saturday lunch and dinner

Silent Mindfulness Meditation (in person)

Nov. 7, 6:30 p.m.–Nov. 9, 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. 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
- 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 sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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

An Unplugged (mostly) Silent Weekend (in person)

Sept. 12, 6 p.m.– Sept. 14
11 a.m.

Choose the length of retreat that works for you!

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Escape the noise, step away from screens and immerse yourself in the present moment. This weekend is for those seeking a break from the constant demands of technology, offering a peaceful space to reconnect with nature, yourself and others—without distractions. Nestled in a serene location, this retreat offers mindfulness, prayer and meditation; nature immersion; creative exploration; meaningful connections; and the opportunity to rest and recharge. No phones, no emails, no notifications—just real moments and real connections. Whether you're looking to reset your mind, reduce stress or simply enjoy a break from technology, this retreat is your invitation to unplug and rediscover the beauty of a slower, more intentional life. Ready to press pause? Join us for this transformative experience.

Friday–Sunday Fee: \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday breakfast

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

Friday–Saturday at 5 p.m. Fee: \$225 includes Friday and Saturday sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Friday–Saturday at 5 p.m. Commuter Fee: \$165 includes Friday and Saturday sessions and Saturday lunch



Programs

Pilgrimage to Justice: Walking the Path of Nonviolence (webinar)

Sept. 3
6:30 – 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Dr. Ken Butigan

Catholic peace activist and educator Dr. Ken Butigan will lead this free webinar exploring pilgrimage as a sacred path toward ecological justice and nonviolence. Part of the Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation initiative, this event highlights local efforts across Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

Held during the Season of Creation, this virtual gathering will reflect on our spiritual call to care for our common home during this Jubilee year of *Laudato Si'* and *The Canticum of the Creatures*.

Register here: <http://bit.ly/3I5RyxR>

Suggested fee: \$15

Sponsored by the Tri-State Network, a coalition of Catholic sisters and spirituality centers in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

Notice something different?

Retreats & Programs will be separated into categories, giving you a way to discern different aspects of what you might be interested in here at Prairiewoods. Color coding as follows:

Creativity

Ecology

Holistic Health

Personal Growth

Prayer

Spirituality

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon

Sept. 7
6 – 8 p.m.

Forest Bathing with the Blood Full Moon

Oct. 6
6 – 8 p.m.

Afternoon Nature + Forest Therapy

Sept. 8 and Oct. 13
2:30 – 3:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Emelia Sautter

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.

Fee: \$25 for moon walks
\$20 for afternoon experience

Awaken Your Creativity through Watercolor (in person)

Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov 18
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Barb Thompson

Join a hands-on, beginner's painting workshop that includes a tracing sheet, step-by-step instructions and an example to reference as we paint, making it perfect for beginners. Class starts with a few watercolor exercises and a demonstration of the project. Then work at our own pace.

- September - Acorns
- October - Pumpkins
- November - Feather

Class is recommended for ages 8–100. Simply bring a positive attitude, ready to learn a new skill!

Fee: \$50/class includes all art supplies

Let Your Heartbreak Be your Guide: Lessons in Engaged Contemplation (in person)

Sept. 9, and 23, Oct. 14 and 28, Nov. 11
6 – 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Kim Novak

During what feels like deeply painful and conflicted times in our communities and world, how do we continue to show up for ourselves and one another - open-hearted and hopeful?

In this 5-session study, we will study and reflect on author Adam Bucko's book, “Let Your Heartbreak Be Your Guide: Lessons In Engaged Contemplation.” Bucko offers practical guidance on how to adopt an “engaged contemplation,” a lived spirituality responsive to suffering and injustice by sharing some of his own heartbreak and transformation.

The facilitator from SAGES (Sacred Activism Grounded in Everyday Spirituality) provides a safe space to explore the intersection of spiritual growth, transformation and social justice using contemplative practice, study & reflection. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome!

Fee: \$25 for series, in person only

Life as a Pathway - Wandering & Wondering as Pilgrims of Hope

Sept. 28
1 – 5 p.m.

Facilitator: Kim Novak

The sacred art of pilgrimage involves both an inward and outward journey - a spirit of always being “on the way”.

Whether we choose to approach life as a regular traveler or pilgrim is up to each of us. The inner journey of the pilgrim is driven by longing and curiosity, transforming the outer journey into an encounter with the Holy in all.

Join us for an afternoon of reflection, discussion, and wandering as we consider the ways that each of us can embrace our lives as “Pilgrims of Hope”.

Fee: Free



Dear Younger Me: A Journey of Reflection, Forgiveness and Renewal (in person)

Sept. 16, 30 and Oct. 14, 28
5:30 - 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Cindy Dunn

Step away from the noise of daily life and enter a sacred space designed for deep reflection and soul renewal. Dear Younger Me is a transformative retreat that invites you to embark on an intimate journey of self-discovery, healing, and connection with God's boundless love.

During this journey, you will be guided through:

- a life review
- personal reflection
- uncovering stories that shaped you and your life

Come as you are. Leave renewed, with a heart softened by love, a spirit anchored in grace, and a deeper understanding of your worth in the light of God's unending mercy. This is your sacred pause—a time to breathe, reflect, and return home to your heart.

Fee: \$100 (dinner included)

Positively Plantiful: Plant-Based 101 Presentation (in person)

Sept. 23
6 p.m.

Facilitator: Mariah Andrews

Curious about adding more plant-based meals to your life? Join Mariah Andrews for a relaxed, practical introduction to plant-based eating. You'll get simple tips for getting started, pantry essentials, and protein guidelines, plus enjoy light samples and take home an easy recipe. This is a casual, presentation-style class — perfect for anyone wanting to learn more without diving into a full cooking workshop.

Fee: \$15



Circle of Trust© (in person)

Oct. 4 (Autumn Harvest)
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Thomas Dean

Give yourself the time and space to engage your whole, authentic self with courage and support as we explore the questions of your life. Discerning our authentic selves—our "hidden wholeness," as Parker Palmer calls it—happens when we honor our integrity and pay attention to our inner source of truth. Each gathering includes poems, stories, songs, artwork and activities from diverse cultures and wisdom traditions, offering opportunities for individual reflection, trustworthy sharing and deep listening. This is open to all, regardless of background or belief.

Fee: \$50

Self Care for Professional Caregivers (via Zoom)

Oct. 22
6 - 7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Elizabeth Lewis

Professional care-giving can compromise your resilience. Secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, and a heightened risk of chronic physical, emotional and spiritual disconnect and mental health issues are just some of the many signs of caregiver stress overwhelm.

In this workshop you will expand relaxation practices aimed at helping renew your energy and inner balance throughout the work day.

Fee: \$25

This workshop is of benefit to anyone who in their professional life contributes to the positive health and wellbeing of others.

Day of Self Renewal (in person)

Sept. 4 & 8, Oct. 2 & Oct. 13

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 (massage, reflexology, spiritual direction or forest therapy), group meditation practices, private guest room for the day, fresh lunch, and access to all that Prairiewoods has to offer. Registration is required eight days in advance.

Fee: \$110 includes two services, group meditation practices, private guest room for the day and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

Programs

Words Make a Way Inward to the Soul (in person)

Nov. 1
1 - 5 p.m.

Facilitator: Cyra Dumitru, MA, PPM

Cultivating an inner haven where we can hear our soul speak and receive our soul's imagery is vital to cultivating resilience and equanimity.

One mindfulness practice that can build paths to and from our soulful centers involves words: truthful, heartfelt, body-infused words. By writing down what we experience and receive from our sacred center, we can continue to receive this sacred sight—absorbing daily and integrating the soul's knowing with greater awareness.

We will use poems to:

- guide and inspire
- pause and reflect
- speak to personal experience as a way to calm our inner haven

Incorporated into our session will be walking the Prairiewoods labyrinth.

Fee: \$40

Channeling Mr. Rogers: How the Labyrinth Can Guide Us as Modern Day Helpers (in person)

Oct. 22
6 - 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Marion Patterson, Winding Pathways

There's a nurturing element to all human beings..."

Mr. Rogers encouraged the nurturing quality in us. He paused to feed his fish and introduced viewers to everyday helpers. As we experience division in the country, we can be the antidote to the angst around us by being a helper. Participants will connect through nurturing and helping stories. A unique labyrinth will help explore our theme.

Fee: \$25



On-going Programs

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

Sept. 3 & Oct. 1
6-7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern
Fee: Free-will offering

Metta Yoga (in person) Mondays & Thursdays

9:30-10:30 a.m. (gentle yoga) & 10:45-11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)

Facilitator: Heather English
Fee: \$120 for 11 classes, \$72 for 6 classes, \$15 for single class

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

Thursdays, Sept. 4 and Oct. 2
12:45-1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12/class

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays & Fridays Sept. 4
1:45-2:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays beginning Sept. 4
4-5 p.m.

Facilitator: Ellen Bruckner
Fee: Free-will offering

Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

first & third Thursdays beginning Sept. 4
7-8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz
Fee: Free-will offering

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Sept. 15, Oct. 6 & 20
6:30-7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$12 per session

Meditation at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays beginning Sept. 8
6:30-7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ian Montgomery
Fee: Suggested donation of \$5

What is this Mindfulness Stuff All About? (in person)

Sept. 2
5-6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ann Jackson, PBVM
Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person) second & fourth Tuesdays beginning Sept. 16 5:30-7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith
Fee: Free-will offering

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

For Children: Sept. 10 & Oct. 29

For Adults: Sept. 17 & Oct. 15
5:30-7 p.m.

Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free includes all supplies (+ dinner for children's group)

Outdoor Morning Hatha Yoga (in person)

Sundays beginning Sept. 7
9-10 a.m.

Facilitator: Sarah Cram Driscoll
Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

Sept. 8 & Oct. 13
12:45-1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$10

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery (in person)

Sept. 28 & Oct. 12
2 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa
Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but free for all to enjoy)

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitches (in person)

Sept. 9, Oct. 14 Sept. 24 & Oct. 22
9:30-11:30 a.m. 6 - 8 p.m.

Facilitators: participants
Fee: Free

Loving Kindness Meditation Practice (in person)

Sept. 13 & Oct. 4
10 a.m.

Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA
Fee: \$10

Sacred Listening Through Mental Illness

(in person)
Sept. 16 & Oct. 21
6 p.m.

Facilitators: Tracy Lees
Fee: Free-will offering

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Sept. 17 - Italian & Oct. 15 - Mexican
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Ali Yoka & Mariah Andrews
Fee: \$15 per lunch

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



Prairiewoods
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

How Exciting: Check out the New Website

Discover something fresh! Our newly redesigned website is live—sleeker, faster, and easier to explore. Dive into a seamless experience filled with inspiration, curated collections, and exciting updates. Come see what's new and find exactly what you're looking for. Visit now and let us know what you think!

30 Stories for 30 Years

Stories unite us and shape our identity. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we invite you to share your moments—big or small—that reflect our mission and impact. Submit your story, inspire connection, and celebrate three decades of shared experiences. Video, photo, poem, pictures are all great ways to reflect on your time/s at Prairiewoods. For questions, ecospirit@prairiewoods.org.

Rooted & Rising: A New Look for Prairiewoods

Why the logo change?
As we near our 30th anniversary, our new logo honors Prairiewoods' roots while reflecting the growth, transformation, and interconnectedness at the heart of our mission.

Why Now?
This is a season of renewal. Our updated logo is designed to be more adaptable for digital use, embroidery and other formats - helping us welcome a new generation with clarity and care.

What happens to the old logo, t-shirts, stickers, etc.?
We will continue using existing items as long as they are useful - honoring the legacy of where we've been, even as we step into what's next.



Mission:

Prairiewoods Franciscan Ecospirituality Center is a sacred space where people of all faiths and cultures are invited to explore and nurture their relationships with the Source of All Being, Earth, Self and Others with an increasing awareness of the story of the Universe.

Save the Date!

Holiday Bazaar November 22, 2025

Holiday Bazaar 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 prairiewoods.org for details.



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:

Prairiewoods
120 E Boyson Rd
Hiawatha, IA 52233
319-395-6700
prairiewoods.org
ecospirit@prairiewoods.org





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 "PrairiewoodsFSC" on:



Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, Sept. 28 from 1-3 p.m.

Gather your family, friends and favorite animal companions and head to the annual *Blessing of the Animals*. 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. (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!

Prairiewoods

November/December 2025

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Spiritual Encounters

Celebrating Thirty Years of
Eco-Spirituality at Prairiewoods

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

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

(continued on page 3)

Prairiewoods Board

Greg Barnett

Software Engineer, Retired

Rev. Rose Blank

United Methodist Clergy, Retired

Peter Correll

Martin Construction

Charles Crawley (Chair)

Community Volunteer

Marie DesJarlais, FSPA (Liason)

Mission Councilor, FSPA

Director, GATE & GATE Charitable Giving

Roselyn Heil, FSPA

Spiritual Director & Pastoral Associate

St. Mary's Church

Dr. Nate Klein

Vice President of Education

Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa

Cara Matteson

Sustainability Director

Linn County

Frank Nidey (Vice Chair)

Community Volunteer

Marin Noska (Secretary)

Stay-at-Home Mom

Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA

Spiritual Director & ESL Instructor

Claire Sagers

Director of Alumni Engagement

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Hether Stauffacher (Treasurer)

AVP RE-Consumer Support Manager

Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust



Director's Corner

The power of presence and the intersection between technology and spirituality



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

“

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

Henri J.M. Nouwen

”

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

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

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

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright

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

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

What Are Spiritual Encounters?

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

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

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

Matthew Andrews' Encounter

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

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

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

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



Matthew J. Andrews
matthewjandrews.com

What does the future hold for Prairiewoods?

Continue to page 4 to find out!

Natalie Baur's Encounter

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

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

Gratitude from the Foundresses

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

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

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



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



Looking to the Future

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

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

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



What's been your most powerful spiritual encounter?

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

Give the Gift of Renewal

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

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

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

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



Retreats

Celebrating the Light of Advent Retreat

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

Facilitator: Jean Sullivan and Ann Jackson PBVM

Spend a quiet weekend anticipating how you might continue to birth light into the world and preparing to enter the anticipation, rest, hope and LIGHT of Advent.

We will reflect on the many invitations we receive to sense and honor this season of Light as we gather stories of celebration, forgiveness, reconciliation, and birth. We'll honor both the tiniest spark of light within and the roaring blaze of Love that surrounds the world. This retreat will offer a space to slow down amidst the holiday rush and connect with the true meaning of the Advent season.

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

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

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship - Winter Table

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

Facilitators: Christina Campbell and Ann Jackson PBVM

As we enter the colder months, Earth retreats and rests to prepare for a new cycle of life.

While much of the land and its inhabitants slumber, a few crops, including resilient greens and root vegetables, thrive in cooler temperatures, assuring a continued abundance of nourishing foods. We, too, need this time of restoration. Utilizing activities such as meditation and responding to writing prompts, we'll consider how that wisdom applies to our relationship with food and nature. Guided by environmentalists, mystics, poets, and contemporary sages, let's gather around the winter table and explore ways in which our food choices can support a healthy outlook during winter and foster peace at personal, community and global levels.

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

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



Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat

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

Facilitator: Chris Klug

Mindfulness is the awareness of what is happening in the present moment. It shapes a wise and compassionate relationship with and response to experiences as they unfold moment by moment. As Joseph Goldstein writes in *A Heart Full of Peace*, "Mindfulness is the quality and power of mind that is deeply aware of what's happening—without commentary and without interference... keeping us connected to brushing our teeth or having a cup of tea."

Research shows that mindfulness can positively affect stress resilience, physical and mental health, the ability to sustain attention, self-regulation of emotions, interpersonal skills, and general wellbeing and happiness. Come cultivate mindfulness in silence through sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and mindful eating with time for instructions, questions, and discussion.

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

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

Power of Silence: Mini Silent Directed Retreat

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

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

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

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

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

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

Retreats

Living with Intention

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

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

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

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

Pick which option works best for your schedule:

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

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

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

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

Facilitator: Catherine Quehl-Engel

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

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

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

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

Prairiewoods' Holiday Retreat

Friday, Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. –

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

Facilitators: Jean Sullivan, Ann Jackson, PBVM

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

Bring a friend and receive 20% off!

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

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



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

Programs

The Power of the Breath

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



Facilitator: Jodi Isolini;
Unlimited Breath Facilitator

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

Important information and instructions:

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

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

Fee: \$35 per session

Program Category Key



Creativity



Ecology



Holistic Health



Personal Growth



Prayer



Spirituality

Words Make a Way Inward to the Soul

Saturday, Nov. 1
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Facilitator: Cyra Dumitru, MA, PPM

Cultivating an inner haven where we can hear our soul speak and receive our soul's imagery is vital to cultivating resilience and equanimity.

One mindfulness practice that can build paths to and from our soulful centers involves truthful, heartfelt, and body-infused words. By writing what we experience and receive from our sacred center, we can continue to receive this sacred sight—absorbing and integrating the soul's knowing with greater awareness.

We will use poems to:

- guide and inspire
- pause and reflect
- speak to personal experience as a way to calm our inner haven

Incorporated into our session will be walking the Prarie Woods labyrinth.

Fee: \$40

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



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

Facilitators: Julio Vera and Ann Jackson PBVM

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

Fee: \$75 for all four sessions

Dream Group

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

Facilitator: Karen Sindelar

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

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

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

The Energetic Power of Words

Tuesday, Nov. 4
5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



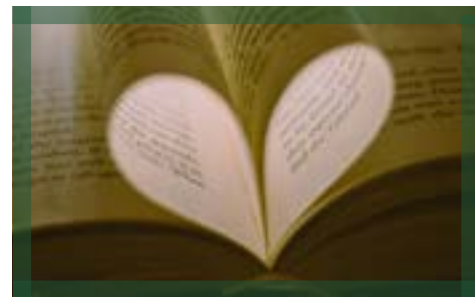
Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

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

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

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

Fee: \$35 (includes dinner & program)



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

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

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

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

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

Fee: \$20 for the series



Labyrinth Walk

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



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

The three phases of the meditative spiritual journey include:

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

Fee: Free

Day of Self Renewal

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

Facilitator: Jean Sullivan



Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services (massage, reflexology, spiritual direction or forest therapy), group meditation practices, private guest room for the day, fresh lunch, and access to all that Prairiewoods has to offer. Registration is required eight days in advance.

Fee: \$110 (includes two services, group meditation practices, private guest room for the day and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

Ash Wood Splint Ornament Class

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

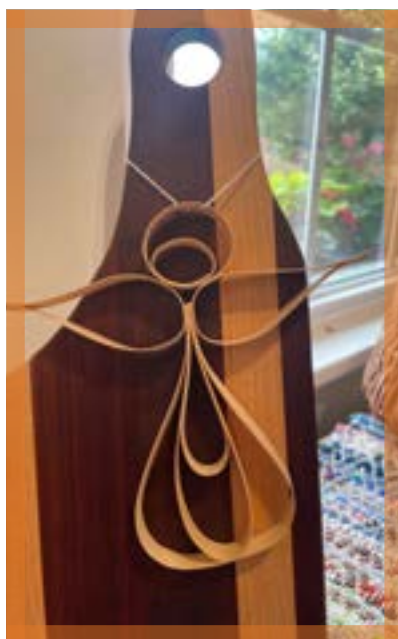
Facilitator: Molly Kephart



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

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

Fee: \$35



Programs

Let Your Heartbreak Be your Guide: Lessons in Engaged Contemplation

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

Facilitator: Kim Novak



In this four session study, we'll reflect on author Adam Bucko's book, "Let Your Heartbreak Be Your Guide: Lessons In Engaged Contemplation." Bucko offers practical guidance on how to adopt an "engaged contemplation," a lived spirituality responsive to suffering and injustice, by sharing some of his own heartbreak and transformation.

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

Fee: \$25 for series

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

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

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

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

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

Fee: \$125 for series



On-going Programs

Metta Yoga

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

Meditation at Prairiewoods (MAP)

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

Go Deeper Thursday (Zoom)

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

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony

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

Going Inward With Sounds & Vibrations

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

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

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

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon

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

Day of Self Renewal

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

Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace

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

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep

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

Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

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

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery

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

Singing Bowl Prayer

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

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience

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

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitches

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

Evening Centering Prayer

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

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group for Children

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

Men Exploring Faith (Hybrid)

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

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (Hybrid)

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

Awaken Your Creativity Through Watercolor

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

Sacred Listening Through Mental Illness

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

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group for Adults

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

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option)

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

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

Harvesting Sun and Soil: Agrivoltaics in Action at Prairiewoods

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

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



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

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

Our Mission

Prairiewoods Franciscan Ecospirituality Center is a sacred space where people of all faiths and cultures are invited to explore and nurture their relationships with the Source of All Being, Earth, Self and Others with an increasing awareness of the story of the Universe.



Prairiewoods
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

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

Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center
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319-395-6700
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ecospirit@prairiewoods.org



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 "PrairiewoodsFSC" on:



 **Prairiewoods** 
Holiday Bazaar

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

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

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

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

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

