**Focus Group Interview with Retreatants**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

**Report by Dan Ebener and Luke Ebener**

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* A second home, felt very comfortable there. But it’s different now with new director.
* A love for the place. Appreciation for beauty of surroundings. Variety of ways to connect with God, outside in nature or inside in rooms.
* Haven’t been there in a while with COVID.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* Place itself and the location and the grounds with birds, flowers, and surroundings.
* Being a quiet place outside the QC is a plus.
* Parking is easy, comfortable chairs, couches, bathrooms, lots of nice amenities.
* A commitment to environmentally positive things- solar panels, farm to table, etc.
* There’s a peace once you get out of the car and don’t want to leave and get back in car.
* Unique in its rural setting and all the porches.
* Groups have been really impressed and said they’ll be back.
* It’s genuinely Iowa.

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* Don’t attract people and parishes within the Diocese and people don’t know about it.
* The gravel road and finding it can be tough.
* The food preparation can improve and it seems like more has been purchased and retreatants got used to freshly baked and prepared meals.
* Serving of meals got more impersonal with COVID and seemed rushed and lost “homey-ness”.
* Have no idea on usage and who is there and people don’t know about it.
* The internal buildings could be more personal and seems more like an office or institutional.
* We don’t offer a lot for the young people.
* Moving the chapel from the Victorian House to the basement.

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Better marketing and hire someone to focus on it.
* Have a notice of upcoming retreats in the bulletins of parishes in Diocese.
* Have personal testaments and personal invitations.
* Go back to high quality, freshly made meals with homemade breads and fresh ingredients.
* Have a housekeeper to keep inside nice.
* Have some internal renovations.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing?

* Offering the rooms in the basement- it’s musty and damp and wouldn’t want to stay by chapel.

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Can utilize more parishes, people, and groups within the Diocese.
* Offer a retreat on how to become elderly and aging with grace and next steps in people’s lives.
* Offer more things on *Laudato Si* and the care of the Earth- it’s a natural fit.
* Focus on young people and young adults- urban vs. peace and quiet; rushed and noise vs. peace and quiet.
* Have lay volunteers focus on specific things they’re good at and enjoy.
* Service Immersion trips with young people and having the Prairie as a place they stay and offer retreat aspects within the trip and work the grounds too.
* Have family retreats/reunions and blend conversations/walks/fun/prayer.
* Partnering with environmental science clubs or Newman Centers or other environmental organizations that are nearby and from Universities.
* Catholic Climate group in Diocese can be a partner.
* People are looking for spirituality coming out of COVID.
* People can work from home and might offer a couple to be able to stay there or have a full-time farm keeper who can stay and live there even if for a year.

**Question #7:** What do you see as the greatest obstacles to growing the Prairie?

* COVID and the challenges.
* Zoom can be an opportunity and obstacle as there are unique partnerships and opportunities to bring people together, but you’re missing beauty of the space.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* Have a 1-day retreat at a parish but that’s sponsored and put on by the Prairie and brings exposure to the Prairie.
* Have a fund drive to raise money for staffing and other needs.
* Human resources need to be a focus to have quality programming, marketing, grounds upkeep, etc.
* Have focus on social justice issues like human trafficking and violence and training on it.
* Create a wider net for where people can find out about the Prairie (national publications, regional, etc). Marketing has to be a top priority and developing relationships and partnerships.
* Partner with other communities of women religious.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie? Anything else?

* Need to have this great conversation with lots and lots of people.
* They’d love to see final focus group report.

**Focus Group Interview with President” s Staff**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

**4-18-22- 2:00**

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* Beautiful, relaxing, peaceful, remote, windy.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* Staff is a strength- Todd has helped a lot as well as maintenance and grounds and everyone out there. The staff fills in as needed.
* Neighbors are a strength and are willing to help and volunteer and participate.
* Retreatants have given positive reviews.
* Food that’s provided especially fresh food.
* Transitioned to online opportunities with COVID very quickly and well.
* Good place to get away from everything and it’s not too far away- good location.
* It is a resource and spirituality center for small towns and parishes nearby.
* Retreat Manager software has helped to assist with retreats and reports and administrative tasks and has consolidated things and gives good information to use.
* The beauty of the place and grounds are well kept.

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* It can be tough to travel on the gravel roads and it’s not super accessible and roads can be tough in the winter.
* Accommodations are limited so a large group staying out there isn’t an option.
* Single beds and sharing a bathroom may be a turnoff to not stay there.
* It is not very accessible (because of steps) and does not have an elevator.
* It is undersized for a retreat center and there aren’t hotels to stay at nearby.
* Victorian house has accessibility issues.
* Administrative tasks can be lacking from the Director and it puts pressure on other staff.
* They could use more staff/volunteers as they’re almost all overworked and not able to take time off when needed.
* Staff is getting older and need to be thinking about transitions.

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Build a hermitage.
* Have fun and community building events and not ‘just spiritual’ events- like wine, baking, knitting, etc.
* Qualities to look for in a director- should live out there, look into a lay person or a couple, has a variety of skills, computer skills and social media knowledge, can build relationships, can offer spiritual direction, young women religious, there are physical demands they need to be able to do.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing? N/A

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Offer more online retreats.
* Offer retreats on nature and the environment and *Laudato Si.*
* Emphasize ‘giving a break’ as people are tired, overworked, living a fast-paced life.
* Bring in more authors of books for a ‘Meet the Author”.
* Work with colleges to recruit more volunteers.
* Develop relationships with local parishes, speak after Masses, and talk to people about it.
* Host a priest meeting or parish meeting at the Prairie so they can experience it.
* Host youth groups, Boy Scouts, High School service projects at the Prairie.
* CEW can be a partner and host it out at the Prairie.

**Question #7:** What do you see as the greatest obstacles to growing the Prairie?

* Supporting the volunteers can be tough.
* Covid.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* Should be thinking about selling it as it is a big cause of stress - but it may not stay a retreat center if it’s sold.
* Look at finances 5-10 years out and maybe do a capital campaign.
* Look at other religious communities to partner with to keep it going and to retreat out there as well.
* Have more of a bed and breakfast with spirituality focus that couples can go to.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie? Anything else?

* Humility Homes’ model (becoming a separate 501-c-3, with its own board) can be win-win, as they would still be involved but would not own it.
* Don’t have capacity to double in-person retreats but can really emphasize online retreats.
* The Living Stations on Good Friday was a huge success and the more things we can do to simply get people out there and experience it, they will come back, and then they know the calendar.

**Focus Group Interview with CHM Sisters Associated with OLPR**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* Haven’t been out there in a while and there have been changes.
* It’s an important ministry we can hopefully continue.
* Place of quiet and beauty to experience God and creation.
* Developed into a very attractive religious space.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* Programs are well done, inviting, and relevant.
* Place of quiet where people can come experience God.
* Beauty of the place.
* Able to see God in everything in the environment.
* Day on Wild Flowers and Birds was really good and can do more with nature and educational opportunities too
* Winter time is beautiful and each season bring its own beauty
* Those that have been on retreat and a part of it are real strengths of telling people about it via word of mouth and they’re buying memory stones out there
* Have a developing database and has helped to expand the range and influence of the Sisters and the work they do
* It is Holy Ground and God’s presence is there

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* Some programs have been cancelled and not the best attended.
* It can be tough to get there in the winter or you might get snowed in.
* Marketing and brochures need to have contact information more prominent.
* Can advertise more to the west and the north and a have wider marketing radius.
* Sense of hospitality when you get there is not the best - it has a ‘cold’ feeling from some staff who focus too much on the ‘business’ side.
* The brochure is small print and lacks a simplicity to it - there’s too much in it.
* There’s not a lot of space for people to stay overnight.
* It could be a little more handicap accessible.
* Constant turnover of staff has hurt.
* People aren’t allowed to come into the kitchen and just be there, chat, and utilize it.
* Loss of volunteers and the support of the volunteers.
* A lot of people still don’t know where it is.

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Offer it as a sabbatical place or longer-term stays
* Want to stick to the core values, but don’t have people coming so don’t want to see it become a commercialized place and want to keep the Spirit of the place
* Expand the number of rooms and places where people can stay in the Victorian House but don’t turn it into a conference center.
* Director Qualities – need flexibility, communication skills, experience with retreat work, organized, hardworking, relational and personal, managerial, understanding of care for environment, gardener and have a green thumb, able to use and can fresh vegetables.
* Need someone to live out there but it doesn’t necessarily have to be the director.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing?

* The garden is being overemphasized - takes away from other important things.

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Offer *Laudato Si* series and others on the environment.
* Work with the Wapsi Center.
* Partner with Universities and offer programs and days and student experiences with sciences and other environmental studies.
* Work with the Diocese and offer priests and deaneries to meet or retreat there.
* Have quilting groups or book clubs or lots of other small church groups and have them use the kitchen so you don’t have to provide staff.
* Have schools or Religious Education classes come out for a field trip or day.
* Have parents come out with the kids and increase the exposure to the Prairie (like Little House on the Prairie day that was done)

**Question #7:** What do you see as the greatest obstacles to growing the Prairie?

* The staff and volunteers and getting older and smaller in number.
* It will be tough to find a director or a Sister to live out there.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* Be realistic about diminishing group and the legacy is important thing to consider
* We should be open to finding a partner to take it over and keep it perpetuity.
* Iowa Heritage Foundation is a natural partner for the environment side.
* Is there an AA or other drug reform group that could take it over like in Bettendorf?
* Don’t have a feel for how much longer we can hang on.
* It would be tough to let go of.
* Launch a capital campaign and intentionally build the fund.
* Work with Clinton Franciscans as a potential partner with a similar mission.
* Look into Iowa Prairie Society as a partner.
* Check into different policies like offering cheaper weekday rates to get more groups.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie? Anything else?

* Glad we’re looking at the right questions, i.e. longer-term questions

**Focus Group Interview with Volunteers**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* Time of transition with new director.
* Programs have been affected as the main attraction is the place itself with COVID.
* Haven’t noticed a huge difference outside - hope that it continues and it’s going well.
* Loved having Matthew Fox.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* Place itself is a positive- tranquility, respite, hospitality, beautiful grounds, retreat focus.
* Sustainability and environmental focus and care of the earth.
* Really solid programming.
* Affordability of programing offerings making it accessible for all.
* Have great information and data on retreats, retreatants, and all that goes on at the Prairie.
* Have been brought to tears during a program before.
* It’s far enough away to ‘get away’, but not too far from QC.
* Lots of people bring friends out with them- can be utilized more and maybe offer incentives if they do bring someone.
* It is pretty handicap accessible.
* Overnight accommodations are nice.
* Food is well made and organic.

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* Had one presenter that lacked facilitation skills and lost the crowd.
* Technology and media weren’t working for a program so need to have things presenters commonly use out there and available.
* Could have more follow-up with programming and ways to continue what’s started in programs offered, either through small groups or other means.
* Advertising and marketing could be better.
* More deliberate evaluation of programs and how they can improve.
* Loss of the gift shop.

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Work more with religious organizations on programming and advertising.
* Have representatives from the Prairie going out to groups to have a personal connection and relationships.
* Director Qualities: Work to their strengths and have volunteers and other staff do the rest.
* Director should not have to live there as it could be done by a volunteer, but it’d be nice.
* Having books available to take for free or use for the day.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing? N/A

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Offer more Zoom opportunities with larger known presenters.
* Work with Junior High, High School and college science and biology programs for a day program.
* Use it as an eco-center and have families come out to volunteer, teach, interactive activity on times when retreats aren’t going on.
* Have more kinesics offerings - Tai Chai and other practices to promote body and relaxation.
* Offer it to organizations for meetings, strategic planning, corporate retreats, etc.
* Work with artists as it seems like a natural fit or have a showing for artists, mini-lectures, photography days, art classes for the day.
* Have a day that includes lunch and the kitchen and learn to cook a new recipe and go for a walk or some other small programming along with it.

**Question #7:** What do you see as the threats to grow the Prairie?

* There are more national and quality online programming you’re competing with.
* Catholic Sisters and religious numbers are going down.
* The gravel road can be tough to drive on and it is isolated.
* Retreat centers are closing around the country.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* Do destination weddings out there and fun events like that.
* Improve marketing.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie? Anything else?

* Thanks for this opportunity to contribute our thoughts.

**Focus Group Interview with Staff and Neighbors**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* Going pretty well and transitioned well through changes and seasons of COVID.
* Facilities and grounds are beautiful.
* Busy- there’s always something going on.
* It will be a transition with new director and feel prepared with volunteer coordinator to help with the transition.
* It’s been slower and smaller groups as we come out of COVID.
* There are questions and uncertainty with how things will be different with new director.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* Stability in staff with Sr. Margaret and Todd over the past 6 years.
* Ministry and mission are the top priorities and they do a good job of sticking to them.
* Runs efficiently with a lot of part time people which isn’t easy.
* It is quiet and remote and has the ‘getting away’ feel.
* The garden and produce provided for the meals and fresh food.
* Sustainability with compost and things are done with care for environment in mind.
* People who come out have a great time.
* Good variety of retreats on lots of issues and focus on social justice.
* Habitat and forested areas are in good shape.
* People come and experience calm, nature, peace, and just feel better leaving than when they got there.
* Mattresses were just updated.

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* Don’t think a lot of people know about it.
* It can be tough to drive on country roads and is just far enough away from the QC to deter some people from coming out.
* It seems like everyone is older and young people aren’t attracted out to the Prairie.

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Expand marketing and people outreach.
* Work in newspapers, Face Book, and other mediums.
* Make presentations to church groups and other people, 1-on-1’s, tell the story of the Prairie better.
* Work with colleges and junior colleges and ecological or biology professors to attract younger people and highlight the grounds and it could be one day or overnight experience.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing? N/A

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Focus on social justice.
* Host family reunion or rehearsal dinners or other events that aren’t ‘spiritual’, but be careful as it might cause mission drift.
* There are a lot of ‘Nones’ who are ‘spiritual but not religious’, so market to them and their generation and less to religion or a specific type of spirituality.
* Talk about why it’s important to take a retreat and self-care.
* Offer more on-line and collaborate with other retreat centers and offer bigger names.
* Partner with Iowa astrologers more as they did a star gazing night and it was amazing.
* More community building and fun activities to get people out there to see and experience the Prairie and everything else they offer.
* Have a master gardeners’ program or offer gardening 101, or photography or wildlife classes.
* High School, Elementary, Junior High field trips and other science days for kids.
* Vacation Bible School could have a day out at the Prairie from different churches.

**Question #7:** What do you see as the threats to grow the Prairie?

* COVID and people being comfortable to being in person.
* Sustainability and rising costs of everything and overall, retreat centers lose money.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* They’ve lived their mission well and should be proud of it, but the Sisters might need to go slightly outside their mission to sustain it in the future, such as opening it up for use for family reunions, wedding receptions, and non-retreat functions.
* Someone needs to live at the Prairie.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie? Anything else?

* There’s been investment in HVAC, windows, roof, but might have to modernize it a little bit more to attract people and update the feel, and make it easier to maintain it.
* Thank you.

**Focus Group Interview with Presenters**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* It’s a real gem and peaceful place.
* Haven’t been there, but have seen pictures and articles, and it looks like a beautiful setting and a place where the Holy Spirit can work.
* Limping along through COVID and programming suffered with participation and you lost a lot that the grounds provide over Zoom.
* Not sure how many people know it’s ecumenical.
* Overall, things are going pretty well and Sisters are committed to all they do.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* The setting and the beautiful grounds and it’s an escape from urban areas.
* Being ecumenical in what it offers.
* Location is a strength as it’s not real far away from QC.
* Good size for a small to medium sized retreat.
* Silence is incorporated into the programming.
* Bring in quality speakers and have a decent variety of subjects.
* Fr. Mike Schwab and all he does.
* The food is quality and fresh.
* The Sisters themselves are a huge asset and their care and goodwill.

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* People just don’t know about it and what’s offered.
* Difficulty in having programming and furnishings that are specifically geared towards men and it seems to be more inclined to serve women.
* The furnishings can be updated as it has a ‘tea room’ feel.
* Cancellation of programs makes it difficult to build momentum.
* Haven’t done much to offer things for younger people.
* Can broaden the offerings of topics and who it’s marketed to.
* It’s difficult to know where to go to see what’s offered, how to pay, get more information, etc.
* The check-in process can be long and a little off-putting.
* There is no lighting around the grounds to be able to do night programming.

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Look at the larger public and try to market to a wider demographic.
* Sponsor things and events in parishes and cities and talk about the Prairie as a part of the presentation to expose people to the Prairie.
* Look at expanding offerings to be able to host larger groups at a time and partner with local hotels and other close-by facilities or even neighbors.
* Expand the time slots of things offered to meet demands of various working hours.
* Help get volunteers and staff working in the area of their gifts and passions- people seem out of place.
* Have a volunteer coordinator and a process for all volunteers.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing? N/A

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Zoom does provide opportunities to do unique things.
* Partner with High Schools.
* There’s a big focus on climate and care for the earth.
* Look at foundations and grants to be able to do improvements or put on larger events.

**Question #7:** What do you see as the threats to grow the Prairie?

* Older generation are not able to go as much anymore and limitations of driving at night
* People are busy and there are tons of competition for time today.
* It can be tough to drive to the place.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* Partner with other retreat centers, including American Martyrs retreat house, to offer joint programs.
* Work more with St. Ambrose.
* Invite college professors to have more rigorous presentations.
* Promote that parishes can use the facility for whatever (staff day, parish council meeting) to see it, experience it, and know about it.
* Offer retreats towards climate change (but that can also be over-emphasized too).
* Partner with organizations to work with to provide lighting or have flashlights available.
* Work with the Diocese or Benet House in RI for support and partnership.
* Have a bus service to help with people being able to get out to the Prairie.
* Work with astronomy departments, groups, the observatory, or families as it’s great for star gazing.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie? Anything else?

* Thanks for this opportunity.

**Focus Group Interview with Advisory Committee**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* It’s peaceful and great to be outdoors.
* Things have been going well but we are in transition.
* Glad there is staff staying on board to help with transition and keep moving forward.
* Have enjoyed getting to know Clinton Sisters and community members.
* Haven’t been out there enough recently to be able to comment.
* Lori and Todd and all of the volunteers are all great assets and very welcoming.
* Lots of good things going on and don’t want to see it go backwards.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* Wonderful environment that welcomes people and draws them back again and again because of the hospitality and the beauty of the place.
* The food and fresh produce and home-cooked meals are a big bonus.
* Todd does a great job updating and cleaning facility and trails and its beauty shines.
* The cosmic walk and the labyrinth have been good additions.
* Contemplative everywhere you go.
* Great variety in programming.
* The staff is a real positive and they do so much out there.
* They transitioned well to online retreats.
* Communication is really consistent.
* It does feel like you’re away from everything.
* They have done a better job at tracking retreatants and data from retreats.
* New barn has been a good addition.
* The chapel is as beautiful as it’s ever been.
* Stations of the Cross on Good Friday was a big win.
* Christmas program with families was a huge success.
* It is ecumenical and works with different denominations.

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* It seems to draw the same group of people and they’re mostly over 60 and being less and less in number.
* Marketing and awareness can be improved a lot.
* There is some rigidity and resistance to change sometimes, and it isn’t going to become self-sufficient without making some changes, such as offering the Prairie for some events that might not be considered “retreats”, such as family reunions, etc.
* It isn’t set up to host large groups and it’s very limited on how many can be there.
* People might not know the chapel is in the basement and can miss it. It’s also tough for some older people to go down the stairs to get to the chapel.
* They could have a greater volunteer base and have specific things for them to do.
* The store going away has been a loss.
* They could be more transparent about their books and finances.

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Have some additional program focuses to bring more people out there to uncover the treasure that it is out there, so they can discover it for themselves.
* Gear programming towards families and younger generations and partner with the Catholic Schools as well as home school kids.
* Have ‘ambassadors’ for the Prairie that are out in the community and promoting the Prairie.
* Have a committee to raise funds, which provides more people with ‘skin in the game’.
* Raise funds for youth and family scholarships and not just the upkeep of the place.
* Director Qualities needed: Pay well. Must be spiritual, think outside the box, be very personable and hospitable, doesn’t necessarily need to put on the retreats, should be fluent with technology, taking care of the garden should be optional - can either do it if it’s their passion or it can be delegated to someone else.
* Hiring process needs to be fluid and open to the Holy Spirit in it all, be open to Sisters from other orders,
* If the director does live out there, it can be tough to have ‘off’ time.
* Look into a couple staying out there – or have co-directors.
* It would be a huge plus but not a requirement to live out there.
* Need to control invasive species and do some work on the grounds.
* Keep up different aspects like the pond (maybe add a fountain), and some other native grasses.
* Have more overnight and longer retreats and less small mini-retreats.
* There needs to be volunteers without their own agenda and to help serve the mission of the Prairie.
* Be friendlier toward kids and offer programs geared towards a younger generation.
* Someone has to live out there to take care of the place all the time, but it would not have to be the same person all the time – it could possibly be switched between days.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing?

* Over-programming as it can tie up the whole day afternoon for only a couple of people.

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Online offerings have expanded its reach and people can still connect online
* The need for peace, slowing down, and quiet in our fast-paced society is as great as ever and the need to detach from technology.
* Kingdom Trail Riders and other non-profits can be a partner with a similar mission and host them for various events.
* The star gazing group is committed to it, but need to expand the number of groups.
* Zoom is a great tool, but it needs to lead people to the Prairie and in person experiences, maybe a tour of the Prairie or previews of upcoming retreats.
* Work with schools and have environmental and science days out there.
* Fun holiday-themed nights out there for the kids to get them to the Prairie.

**Question #7:** What do you see as the threats to grow the Prairie?

* Weather can affect things and limit people being out there.
* The distance can be just far enough away that it prohibits people from coming out and travelling on the gravel road can be difficult.
* COVID and people’s fear of coming together stalled momentum.
* It can be tough to find good partnerships which benefits the Prairie in more than just a name - you need to bring people out to the Prairie to reap full benefits and exposure. Hybrid versions can be beneficial though.
* People got used to Zoom and not travelling, so it’s harder to get them there in person.
* Boards and organizations are set in their own ways and meeting spaces, so need to offer something more or different that is beneficial to them.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* Work with parishes for Confirmation and High School retreats and staff retreats.
* Have more in person programming and transition away from Zoom and have relational time - it’s often lost on Zoom.
* Have the Catholic Service Board, Bible Studies, or other church groups come out some day and experience the Prairie.
* Have seniors in High School and have a day that is all about going to college and moving out of the house for the first time.
* Have summer and after-school programs out there for a day event.
* Work with the Nahant Marsh and Brian Ritter and have educational programs at the Prairie and bring younger kids out there.
* Work with Universities and schools to offer more classes for Biology and other practices.
* Use it like a classroom.
* Do more wine and painting nights and other community building events.
* Have soup suppers during Lent for food, relationships built within groups, and spiritual nourishment.
* What is its future identity if not a retreat center? We need to ask this question.
* Work with other entities outside of the mission (businesses and corporations or family reunions and weddings) to have them use the grounds and space for meetings or other offerings to make money to pay for the mission of everything else. Although it has to be planned and not interfere with missional retreats and programs, and needs a fee structure. It increases exposure and awareness to the space.
* Partner with the Diocese and parishes and have finance councils and other boards out there for staff retreats and meetings.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie? Anything else?

* The Advisory Committee needs to become a not-for-profit board and the Sisters of Humility legacy will still live on just like Humility Homes.