

# Our Life as Mission

NEWS FROM MARTHA  
LEADERSHIP TEAM

 *Sisters of St. Martha*

ISSUE 14  
DECEMBER 2024

*"Standing together in undaunted hope"*



## *In this issue:*

- Martha Christmas
- Living Community with Joy
- Martha Associate Reflection
- *Standing4Justice* from Darlene



*Outdoor crib, Bethany, 1956*



# ADVENT MESSAGE

**A**s I wrap myself these early mornings in a comforter made for me by one of my Martha Sisters, I pray that I will be able to commit myself to walk in the darkness that permeates these times, even in relation to Religious Life. My prayer is that I wrap us all in the virtue of trust and the spirit of hope. As I have often said, **there is no blueprint for the path ahead.** We walk by **faith** committing ourselves to the walk. We are called to listen to one another as we seek a way forward.

**I** find that the darkness has become quite comfortable for me these early days as there is no distraction except to **wait.** I am waiting for inspiration and for **Light** to come and make things clearer for me... for us. We know the real theme of Advent is learning to wait in the darkness for the Light to be born again...in our midst. (...) I am learning to wait expectantly, believing that if I wait long enough and

am still enough, I will receive the wisdom that I would never have heard without the silent waiting in darkness.

**G**od makes home in us even in our limitations and darkness. God leads us out of darkness to the wider spaces where Church can be seen as a welcoming place for all the people of God. Sisters, Associates and friends, let us continue to wait together and ponder the mystery of **darkness** and the heartfelt gift of **finding home.** In the early hours of Christmas morning, I will join you in the dance of darkness and Light as we wait in hope. As we gaze into the manger to see the newborn child, may we be graced with the experience of knowing that Jesus the Christ has visited us again in our darkness and has left a spark within us to shine into the world.

~ Sr. Brendalee Boisvert  
CSM Congregation Leader





# NEW LEADERSHIP INSTALLATION

On Monday, July 29, the Sisters of St. Martha marked the Feast Day of St. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus and the Anniversary of the Congregation with a special, double celebration: the renewal of vows and the Installation of the new Leadership Team.

Every year, Sisters of St. Martha celebrate the Anniversary of the Congregation, remembering the 15 Founding Women who, on this mid-summer day in 1900, stood up and volunteered to become a new religious community.



This year's celebration included also the ceremonial Rite of Installation of the New Leadership. During this ceremony, held every five years, the outgoing team formally passed on the symbolic "KEY" to the newly elected leaders, thereby showing their willingness *to carry the responsibility of stewarding the life, values, and mission* of the Congregation and *to assist in the unfolding and the implementation of the Sacred Word of the new Direction Statement*, thoughtfully crafted during the General Chapter of 2024 held in April.

Sister Brendalee Boisvert has been called by the Congregation to be Congregation Leader into the next five years; Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick of the Diocese of Antigonish, presided over the Eucharistic celebration. Sister Brendalee expressed her readiness and willingness to courageously lead the Congregation in shaping its emerging future.

The celebration concluded with Bishop Kirkpatrick's blessing of the new Team,



*Members of the new Leadership Team, left to right: Joanne O'Regan, Sr. Liz Riopelle, Sr. Claudette Gallant, Sr. Josephine MacLellan, Sr. Jovita MacPherson, Sr. Donna Brady, and Sr. Brendalee Boisvert.*

encouraging them to embody the spirit of their patroness, St. Martha, by joyfully serving their fellow Sisters and fostering a spirit of community and grace.



*Sr. Brendalee Boisvert and Bishop Kirkpatrick*



# ARBORETUM DAY

On a sunny Sunday in late September, a group gathered on Bethany Property to discover what makes a happy tree!

To introduce more people to the Bethany Tree Walk, CSM Bethany Arboretum Committee curated a selection of 10 trees from the 48 designated in the Tree Walk. On September 22, a dedicated member of the Committee, Henri Steeghs, led an engaging guided tour, generously sharing his extensive knowledge of the trees and passion for the Arboretum.

Participants brought along intriguing questions, sparking insightful conversations and deepening the experience for everyone involved. Overall, it was a delightful and enriching opportunity to learn about the beauty and significance of these trees.

*Thank you to Henri and everyone who showed up!*



*Henri Steeghs sharing the wealth of his knowledge*



*Even though winter is upon us, all are welcome to pick up the brochure at our Bethany Tree Walk Kiosk or scan the QR code, and walk around Bethany Property to learn about these magnificent trees!*



# 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF WELLSPRING



This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Wellspring Centre at St. Francis Xavier University, a milestone celebrated with great appreciation and joy.

The commemoration took place on Thursday, November 14, when members of the CSM Leadership team, Wellspring staff – Sister Theresa Parker and Muffy MacIntyre, students, volunteers, and the Advisory Committee gathered to honor the Centre's enduring contributions to the university community.

During the celebration, Sr. Brendalee Boisvert, Sr. Claudette Gallant, and Muffy MacIntyre ceremoniously cut the anniversary cake (*see photo*), marking the occasion with a sense of gratitude and shared purpose. Elizabeth Kell, Chair of the Advisory Committee, delivered heartfelt remarks, expressing appreciation for the dedication of those who make Wellspring a cornerstone of hospitality and community at StFX.

A student also shared a poignant message of gratitude, reflecting on the safety, peace, and sense of belonging she finds at Wellspring. Her words underscored the Centre's vital role as a welcoming and supportive environment—a true home away from home for many. The event was a testament to Wellspring's lasting impact and the strong community it continues to foster.





## SR. CATHERINE MACFARLANE HONORED



On August 20, Fr. Doug MacDonald, Chaplain at CBU, organized a heartfelt farewell party for Sister Catherine MacFarlane in North Sydney to celebrate her impactful life and 65 years of ministry across Canada, with an emphasis on her service at Cape Breton University.



*At the farewell party*

Despite her initial reservations about a farewell party, Sister Catherine was overwhelmed by the turnout, which included students she had taught decades earlier, representatives from CBU, colleagues, friends, community members from Alder Point School, local families, and a few Marthas. The event featured warm speeches,

a delicious meal, and touching reflections on her influence, including a tribute from Tom Gaskill, a former student who became a leader in education. The gathering left Sister Catherine deeply moved and grateful for the connections and gratitude shared that day.

## SR. LILLIAN'S BENCH

Earlier this fall, Sister Lillian Gaudet offered thanks, on CSM Social Media, to the parents of her former voice students for the wonderful gift of a bench that is now sitting in St. Theresa's Garden on Bethany property.

Sister Lillian was deeply moved by the gesture and the overwhelming response to her Facebook post. Years ago, instead of sending her voice students to competitions, she organized fundraising concerts, dedicating proceeds to those in need. She continues to wish that everyone who sits on the new bench be inspired to find the courage to use their voice to make a difference in the world!





*Did you  
know?*  
CSM FACTS

## MARTHA CHRISTMAS

Christmas has always held a special place in the hearts of the Sisters of St. Martha. At Bethany Motherhouse and in every community where the Marthas served, extensive preparations transformed the season into a time of joy and togetherness.

Inside, the house was beautiful as usual with Christmas trees, baskets and wreaths of pine, cones, candles and other Yuletide decorations. The chapel sanctuary was a mass of flowers, and the beautiful gold vestments and the Crib all combined to make of this particular part of the house a corner of Heaven. Father Johnston celebrated Mass at Midnight, followed by two Low Masses. Sister Pauline Marie may well feel rewarded for her untiring efforts and work with the choir. The "Missa Nativitate" and the Christmas Carols were truly beautiful.



*Novices decorate the Christmas tree,  
Bethany, 1954*



*Under the Christmas tree, Bethany, 1954*

*Around the Christmas wreath, Bethany, 1961*



Reading through annals and Novitiate journals, it is clear that Christmas was taken seriously and lot of effort was put into making it a very special time for all Sisters, especially for young Postulants and Novices. We read in the 1949 Novitiate Diary: *"Christmas is a time of gladness and rejoicing, and this is certainly true at Bethany. However, there are degrees of happiness, and the measure of your happiness depends a great deal on your preparation"*. This very Martha-like approach to any work that needs to be done ensured wonderful, warm, and relaxing celebrations that everyone awaited and cherished.

Decorating, blessing of the tree, Christmas carol singing, midnight mass, and other special masses, gifts under the tree, festive meals, social gatherings full of singing, stories, conversation, even dance - these were typical Christmas activities of the Marthas.



# MARTHA CHRISTMAS

*continued*



*Novices skating at Bethany Rink, 1961*

*We arose early and sat around in an informal circle on the floor inspecting each others gifts. Since a great number of Sisters received skates, many of us journeyed off to the rink. Cleaning off the ice, gave us an excellent appetite for our lovely Christmas dinner. After duty, we met in the Novitiate for all our letters and cards which had been stacking up through Advent. We went skating again in the afternoon, taking our Christmas candy with us. Christmas seemed to be the most beautiful ever spent.*

—Memoirs, 1952

Christmas celebrations in the 1940s and 1950s were vibrant and filled with joy, no doubt strengthening bonds of community spirit among the Marthas. During holidays, Sisters at Bethany would also gather with members of the Congregation de Notre Dame, another local community: *"Most enjoyable evenings were spent and all of us enter wholeheartedly into and enjoy these get-togethers. they give an opportunity for relaxation, and help to engender a friendly, Sisterly spirit"* (The Bethanite, Jan 1956). The written memories of Christmases past come from annals and the internal journal *The Bethanite*, which came to life in 1929 precisely to enable Sisters in the West and East to share the holiday spirit.

*May God's Love  
grace your faithful  
heart  
With blessings  
that increase,  
And bring you joy  
at Christmastime  
And everlasting peace.*



*The last Christmas tree at Bethany Motherhouse, 2017*



*Christmas 2023 at  
Parkland Antigonish*

Today, while the pace may be gentler, the holiday continues to be a special time for the Congregation. Every year, a beloved crib is set up in the Heritage Gallery at Parkland Antigonish and Sisters at each level of care celebrate Christmas together, enjoying party time, holiday meals, treats and gifts, music, and, of course, special liturgical events. These festive traditions continue to enrich spirits and bring joy, inspiring gratitude and hope.



## Christmas Crib / Crèche

The Heritage Gallery at Parkland Antigonish showcases eight stunning stained-glass windows and holds small exhibits celebrating the Marthas' rich history. Each December, this serene space transforms into a quite, sacred, and festive space, with a marvelous Christmas crèche as its centerpiece.

The crib was first introduced 70 years ago, in July 1954, as a Feast Day gift from the Motherhouse and the Missions to Mother Ignatius Floyd. Initially, it featured a modest set of figures: the Christ Child, Mary, Joseph, an angel, a donkey, and an ox. Later that year, during Christmas, the shepherd was added as a thoughtful gift. On December 22, 1954, the crib received a special blessing from His Excellency, Bishop John R. MacDonald. Following the ceremony, the Choir Sisters filled the air with beautiful carols. From that day forward, the crib was illuminated each evening, with carols resonating from 7:00 to 9:30, creating a cherished tradition that brought warmth and joy to the community. By 1956, the



*Novices carolling, Bethany, [1956 or 1957]*

collection had grown to include a full set of figures, including a camel, all meticulously hand-carved and painted in Italy, procured by the Rambusch Decorating Company.

For the 1956 addition to the Crib, Sister Mary of Mercy planned one little lamb, and this she ordered early in the summer. Some weeks before Christmas a huge box arrived, one which seemed far, far too large for one wee lamb. When the packing sheet came it indicated that the box contained TWO lambs and one CAMEL! Sister was terribly perturbed. What in the world had happened? She had ordered only ONE lamb, and certainly she had NOT ordered a CAMEL! Had the firm sent the wrong order, and was this to be a SECOND disappointment?

While she was pondering what to do, and puzzling over the defection of the hitherto very reputable and reliable Rambusch firm, the mystery was solved. The next day's mail brought a letter from the firm, informing her that in 'partial atonement' (they used these words) for the disappointment they had caused last year but not having the Three Kings arrive in time, they were donating to our Crib an extra lamb and a CAMEL! There was great jubilation when this became known! We just wish all of you could see the camel. He stands over 3' high, and is as lifelike as possible. Together with the Three Kings, which are ornate and colorful, he gives the last final touch to the Crib. The shelter has been enlarged this year, a small lean-to being added at each side, and this creates a much more spacious effect.



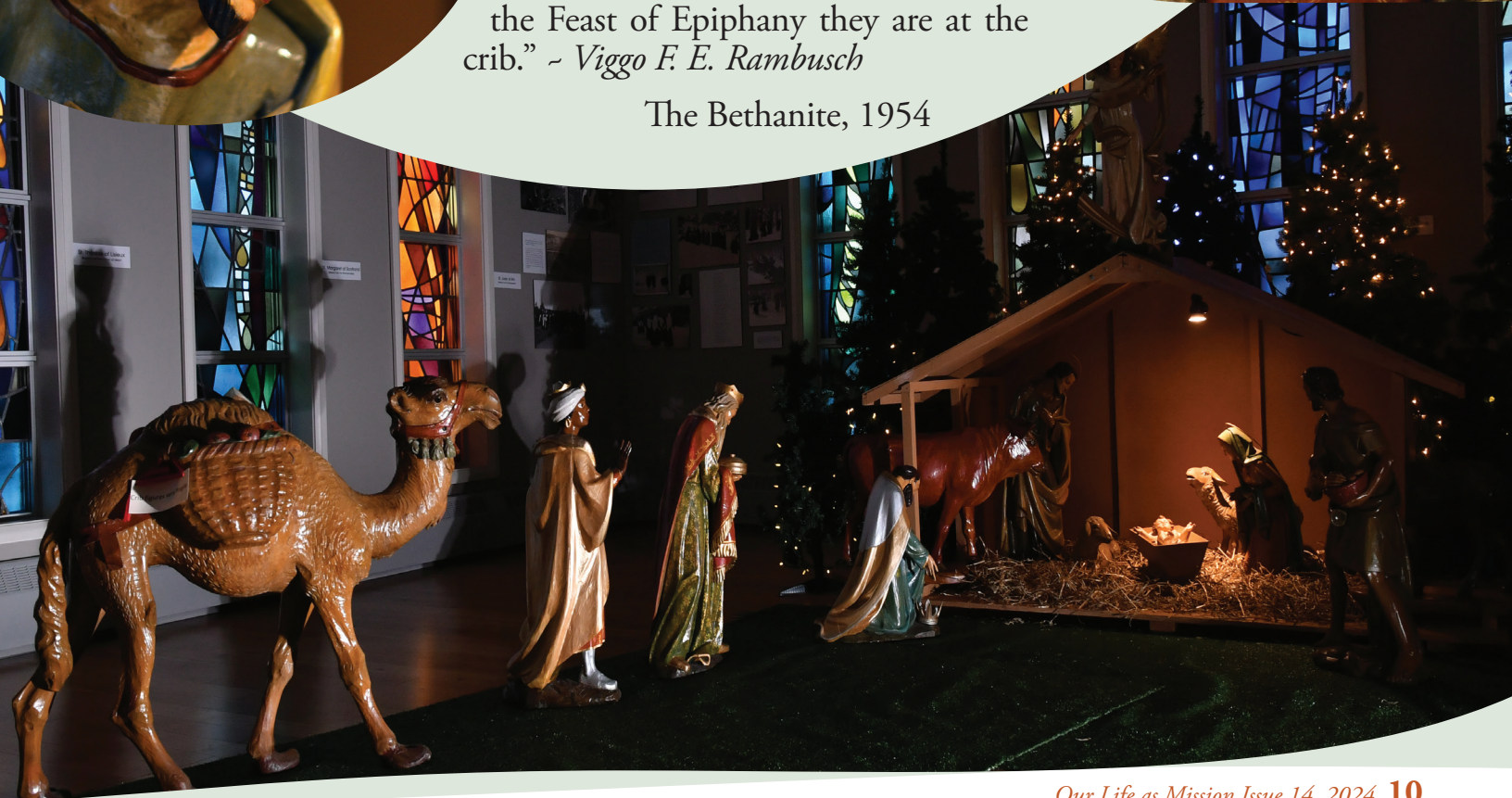


## MARTHA MEMORIES IN OBJECTS



“We are passing on to you...a Spanish custom...: The Three Kings are always placed at a distance from the crib and then each night the figurines are moved closer and closer, until finally on the Feast of Epiphany they are at the crib.” ~ *Viggo F. E. Rambusch*

The Bethanite, 1954





# OUR MARTHA VALUES

## Living Joyfully: The Heart of Martha Community Life

**L**iving community life with joy is a meaningful mission for the Marthas, as it reflects their commitment to the values of **COMMUNION** and **SERVICE**. One of the important ways of strengthening relationships, refreshing their spirits, and finding renewed energy to support or be of service to one another in their daily lives and ministries, has always been quality down time. An important element of community lifestyle that nurtures community bonds, recreation mostly happened within the congregation for the first few decades; it was only with social changes of the 1960s that travel to visit family or for leisure, became a wonderful, life-giving option.

*Times of recreation and celebration were joyful, filled with good conversation, camaraderie, humour, dance, music, and good food. Sister John Baptist Cameron remembered evening recreation when "the walls of the Convent re-echoed with gales of laughter; as Sisters related the funny episodes of the day, or recalled amusing experiences of the past!" The Marthas learned to embrace both work and play (...)*  
*And Martha Served, p.31*

*Sisters enjoying summer vacation on the ocean, 2024*



### COMMUNITY LIFE

# 29

*Rest, leisure and vacations renew us in our commitment and contribute to our personal community, and apostolic life.*

*GENERAL DIRECTIVES, CSM, 1983*

*Sisters offshore at Fatima Retreat House, 1966*





# OUR MARTHA VALUES *continued*

## Living Joyfully: The Heart of Martha Community Life



*Sister Lillian Gaudet celebrates her anniversary, 2024*

In the life of a Martha, there are many celebrations. In such special moments, Sisters come together in a spirit of inclusivity and mutual respect, setting aside any differences to rejoice as one. These gatherings are vibrant expressions of their shared faith, love, and commitment to community. Some occasions that the Marthas celebrate together are milestone birthdays, anniversaries, jubilees, important dates for the Congregation as a whole, Feast Days, holidays, etc.

At these celebrations, Sisters gather for shared prayer, music, special mass, festive meals, or other joyous activities. Anyone who is familiar with the Marthas will know that they love dancing! A few beats of good celtic music gets many feet off the ground during Martha socials!

This intentional practice of celebrating as a community not only deepens their connections but also serves as a testament to the power of collective joy. It reminds the Sisters—and all who witness it—that **community life is both a gift and a calling**. Through these moments of shared joy, the Marthas live out their mission with grace and authenticity, embodying the very spirit of service and hospitality they seek to extend to the world.

### MISSION AND SPIRIT

#### #31

*We encourage others to respond to God's call to serve him in consecrated life through the witness of our gift of self to God lived in community, with simplicity and joy.*

*GENERAL DIRECTIVES, CSM, 1983*



*Chapter 2024 Social - good music, good times!*



*Late Sister Margaret Landry during celebrations of her 100th birthday in 2023*





## A WONDERFUL VISIT TO ANTIGONISH!

It is always wonderful to wake in the morning and to give thanks for a new day! Today I awoke in Antigonish and looked out the window of the hotel to discover a snowy mess on the car, with continued wet flurries making the ground quite slushy! Oh dear, I thought, this might be a tricky ride home to Cape Breton!

The previous day, Sunday, October 27, had been a glorious day to drive up to Antigonish! A cool, but sunny day, with just enough colour left on the leaves to appreciate the beauty of Autumn! I was travelling to visit

our newest Martha Associate Group on Sunday evening, and I was looking forward to the visit!

The new group has been gathering monthly now for almost a year. They have been forging a wonderful bond under the capable coordination of Sr. Sandra Cooke, along with the assistance of Sr. Brendalee Boisvert. Sr. Claire MacNeil has also volunteered to journey with the group.

Upon arrival at Martha Place, I received a warm Martha welcome from Sr. Sandra Cooke! As our journeyers and Sisters arrived in the multipurpose room, I continued to receive warm welcomes, hugs and smiles!! The group has 10 journeyers who attend regularly. On this night, 8 journeyers, along with one new “Come and See” person, our three Marthas, and myself, were in attendance.

Since October of 2023, the group has had the opportunity to learn, discuss and share on several topics. Some of these topics included: the history of the Sisters of St. Martha and what it means to be a Martha Associate. The group also spent a special evening with Sr. Dorothy Moore.

On my evening with the Antigonish group, I selected a prayer written by Sr. Joyce Rupp which included a short meditation on the sacredness of a tiny rock. Several journeyers in the group shared that they loved to collect rocks! I was amazed at how the rocks “spoke” to each person! I am always humbled at the many ways our God surprises us!!!

*Bethany Centennial Garden in  
Antigonish*





# MARTHA ASSOCIATES UPDATE



The gathering continued with a short walk through the history of the Martha Associates, followed by some sharing on what it means to be “Carriers of the Charism”. An attempt was made to sing the “Hymn to St. Martha” composed by Sr. Mary Gouthro. (We will do better next time!!!) The gathering closed with our “Martha Associate Prayer”, followed by a time of fellowship. It was truly a blessed evening!

Driving back home today, through the wet, the slush, the heavy flurries, and the

occasional rays of sunshine, ( REPEAT) , I felt a deep sense of gratitude and hope for our Sisters and for our new group! And..... finally, I was able to breathe a deep sigh of relief as we pulled into our driveway at home.

No more trips in October without the snow tires on the car!!!

God Bless,

*Julia Townsend*

*Director Martha Associates*

*October 28, 2024*







## GREETINGS FROM MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY

**Greetings to you all!**

**As I write, it's difficult not to feel the weight of the times we are living in. It's natural to experience moments of fear, unease, or frustration when faced with the significant challenges before us—challenges that call for collective effort in a world often marked by division in our political and social landscapes. In light of this, it is more important than ever to find and shine a light on what is good, and there is so much good at work.**

**In our work as Martha Justice Ministry, we are so blessed to be part of communities and networks for people dedicated to making life better for everyone. We see this in our work to end poverty, in our work to care for creation, and in our work for reconciliation, justice, and peace.**

**I hope that these updates offer some inspiration and encouragement in these challenging times.**

**Peace and Blessings,**

**~ Darlene O'Leary, Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry**







## ORCIE UPDATE



As a representative of the Marthas on the Board of the Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology (ORCIE) and as a member of the ORCIE Executive Committee, I get to share in the great work ORCIE has been doing in advocating for strong federal climate action and meaningful reconciliation work with Indigenous communities.

On August 28, ORCIE Executive Members Joe Gunn, Sue Wilson, and myself, as well as new ORCIE Researcher, Sasquia Antunez Pineda, had an online **meeting with Environment and Climate Change Minister Steven Guilbeault** and his senior staff person, Jennifer Lash, along with Maryo Wahba (Citizens for Public Justice), and Cheryl McNamara (Kairos). This meeting followed on a letter sent by 13 faith leaders and organizations requesting a meeting with the Minister to discuss *federal climate action*.



The discussion included a call for more ambitious climate targets, as well as ongoing collaboration with the Minister's office on shared priorities, including moving toward decarbonization and a just transition. It also included updates on CPJ's *Give it up for the Earth* campaign, and For the Love of Creation's *100 Faithful Climate Conversations*.

Minister Guilbeault shared about his government's climate work and challenges they have faced. He was enthusiastic about continued engagement with faith groups on our shared commitments for urgent and meaningful climate action.

In September, ORCIE Executive Members and staff had two days of strategic planning at the Ottawa office to review the progress of the past year and to outline priorities and goals for the year and years ahead. It was a very constructive two days together, and it is exciting to be part of ORCIE's growth as a voice for religious congregations advocating for federal action on climate justice and reconciliation.





## VICAR OF THE FOUNDER LECTURE

On October 4, I had the great pleasure of giving this year's Vicar of the Founder Lecture at St. Ninian's Place, as part of the St. Francis Xavier Homecoming activities.

Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick presided at mass before the event. Following this, those gathered had a wonderful meal together. I then spoke to the group about the work of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), with a particular focus on Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*.

It was a lovely event and a good opportunity to share the important messages from *Laudato Si'* on **Care for Our Common Home**, as well as the work of Martha Justice Ministry and as the Marthas' Liaison to the Sisters of Charity Federation UN NGO.

*Many thanks to Bishop Kirkpatrick for the invitation to give the lecture!*



*Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick with  
Darlene O'Leary*

## TAMARACK ENGAGEFEST CONFERENCE

Sister Marion Sheridan, Joanne Tompkins, and I joined Tamarack's Natasha Pei and Sylvia Cheuy in a workshop on October 30, as part of Tamarack's annual *EngageFest Conference*. This year's theme was "The Power of People and Place".



Our workshop was called "Building a Movement for Change: Lessons from Atlantic Canada." We had a great discussion about **the Marthas' engagement in work on poverty eradication, particularly through**

**Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty, the larger context of the Antigonish Movement, and the more recent initiative with Tamarack of the Basic Income NOW Atlantic Canada group.** It was nice to share our experiences and reflections on building these movements and being part of wider, and growing, movements for change.





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## WALKING TOGETHER FOR PEACE

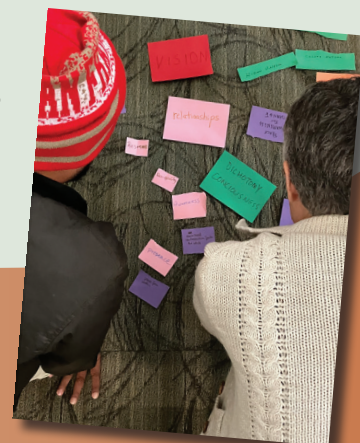
*Walking Together for Peace* is a grassroots initiative involving Peace walkers from around the world who came together in September to walk from Pugwash to Halifax to promote interconnected peace issues, including nuclear disarmament and decolonization.

We were so pleased that the group was able to come to Antigonish before their walk to have two sessions. The first session on Friday, September 6, was an afternoon on **Nonviolent Economy** with Jill Carr-Harris (*on the photo below*), Anuj Jain, and others at the Antigonish Peoples Place Library.



The second session on Saturday, September 7, was a gathering at the Coady Institute and walk to the Bethany Property to pray together at the Marthas' Peace Pole. We then joined for a lovely lunch and an afternoon session of teaching and learning together through stories of **peace building**.

Though the day was blustery, it was a beautiful time to walk, pray, eat, and learn together.



*Many thanks to the Peace walkers  
who joined us for the event!*





## BASIC INCOME

In September, members of Martha Justice Ministry, Sister Marion Sheridan, Joanne Tompkins, and Amy Brierley, participated in the annual Basic Income Guarantee Nova Scotia conference in Halifax, called *“Confronting the Challenges: A Livable Basic Income Guarantee for All Who Need It.”*

Joanne moderated a panel discussion on the work of Basic Income NOW Atlantic Canada, and Sister Marion spoke on the panel as one of the founding members of the group, which now includes representatives from each of the Atlantic provinces.

The panel discussed the history of the Atlantic group and the **importance of partnerships**, particularly reflecting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

There was also a discussion on the **PEI basic income demonstration project proposal** that is being considered for implementation by the province of PEI in conversation with the federal government. In addition, there were updates from each of the Atlantic provinces on their **work promoting basic income**, and there was helpful information on resources to access for those participating.

Other workshops included a very profound sharing by Niigaan Sinclair, Anishinaabe writer, scholar, and activist, who talked about **basic income as an extension of the Indigenous practice of sharing a meal and ensuring everyone has enough.**

It was a very positive day of sharing ideas and strategies for moving forward on basic income!



*Basic Income NOW Atlantic Panel*







*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## MARTHA NEW GROWERS

It has been a very active season for the New Growers, David Matheson and Meghan Johnny! Along with the amazing growing season they had, they also hosted four workshops, and several tours of community groups and classes interested in the program and the work they are doing.

**New Growers workshops** took place in June, July, August, and October, through all kinds of weather, so congratulations to the hardy souls that came out in the extreme heat and heavy rain! David and Meghan offered helpful information and guidance to participants about planting, soil health, addressing challenges, and preparing your garden for the winter.



Meghan and I had a chance to **speak to a Religious Studies class** at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, who were interested in the connection between theology, in particular integral ecology, and local, organic farming. We had a great discussion, touching on themes including what Gospel Hospitality means in sustainable farming.

Meghan and David also gave a **presentation to the Marthas** at Parkland about their year, what they have learned, what challenges they faced, and their hopes for local food security and for young farmers.

*We are so grateful to have David and Meghan with us to share about the New Growers program and their work!*



We also had **several groups come to the farm area for tours**, including from the Coady Institute, StFX Nutrition and Climate/Development classes, and others. It is wonderful to see the interest from the community in the great work being done, and the interest in local, organic, and sustainable food!





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## TAKE ACTION!

Development and Peace Caritas Canada has launched its fall campaign, *Reaping Our Rights*, with a focus on supporting the rights of small-scale farmers and peasants' movements globally.

**REAPING  
OUR RIGHTS**

**Help protect small farmers' rights.  
DEMAND A DUE DILIGENCE LAW NOW!**

**Join us!**  
devp.org | 1-888-234-8533

Development and Peace  
CARITAS CANADA

Along with this **call for solidarity**, the campaign continues the years long call for the federal government to adopt strong human rights and environmental due diligence (mHREDD) legislation **to ensure that Canadian companies are not violating human rights or causing environmental damage when they operate internationally.**

**LET'S ACT  
IN SOLIDARITY**

**GLOBALLY  
SIGN THE  
ACTION CARD**

Canada has a duty to uphold human rights by putting people and the environment before corporate interests, both at home and abroad.

This is why we are asking the Government of Canada to adopt a **strong human rights and environmental due diligence law.**

Scan to sign online:  
**devp.org/act**

**LOCALLY  
HAVE A  
SOLIDARITY MEAL**

Organize a meal with your family, community, school or parish. Take the time to consider the foods that make up your meal.

- Where do they come from?
- Who produced them?
- Under what conditions?

Be thankful for the abundance of food we are privileged to eat and discuss how it can be produced and sold in fairer, more sustainable ways. **Take the opportunity to collect signatures on the action card!**

**Together, let's work towards *Reaping our Rights*!**

- **Ask your MP** to support due diligence legislation.
- **Talk to your family and friends** and invite them to sign the action card.
- **Make a donation** to support peasant communities in the Global South.
- **Follow us on social media:** @DevPeace #ReapingOurRights

Development and Peace  
CARITAS CANADA

1-888-234-8533  
devp.org

To learn more about this campaign, as well as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP)*, and to take action in support of mHREDD legislation, go to:

<https://devp.org/en/campaign/reaping-our-rights/>





*Embracing Our Neighbour  
and Our Common Home*

## UN NGO ORIENTATION

Jimmy Walters, the Sisters of Charity Federation United Nations (UN) Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Representative, has offered two virtual UN Orientations (October and November) to provide a glimpse into the work of the UN and the NGO.

Jimmy walked participants through a presentation that included the work of the UN bodies, the work of the UN NGO, some of the key priority issues that the NGO engages in, some committees Jimmy is on, and **how the Federation congregations engage through the work of the NGO Liaisons.**

It was a very informative look at the UN, key issue areas, and the work of the Federation UN NGO. Jimmy did a wonderful job engaging the participants in conversations.

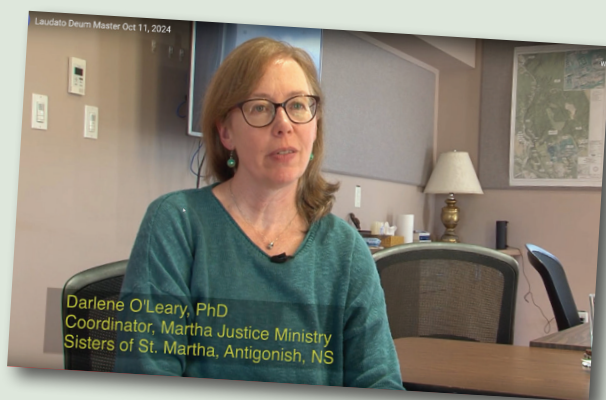
It was certainly a reminder of the importance

**of our engagement as global citizens and of the voice of civil society in issues of global importance.**



## LAUDATE DEUM DOCUMENTARY

The latest documentary from film maker Kevin Moynihan is on *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation released in 2023, ahead of the UN Climate Conference (COP 28).



This documentary, a great educational resource for faith communities and others, looks at the significance of *Laudate Deum*

in its call for **urgent action to address the climate emergency and protect the planet.**

It features interviews with theologian Hilda Koster, St. Michael's College/Regis College, Caroline Brouillette, Climate Action Network (CAN-Rac) Canada, and me.

I was happy to share some of the ways the Marthas are **living the call to care for creation**, through **the use of solar panels on buildings** to the **New Growers program** supporting sustainable, organic farming.



## MJM LIBRARY

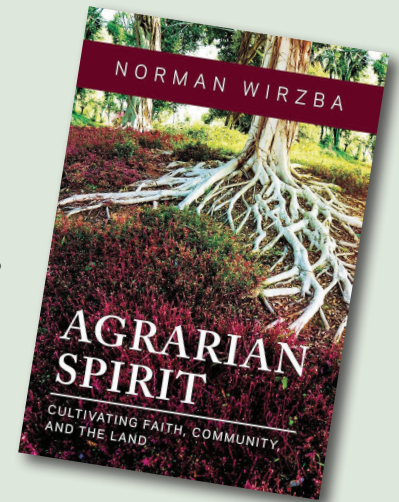
The most recent additions to the Martha Justice Ministry Library are two books on care for creation and action for the planet.

**Norman Wirzba**

*AGRARIAN SPIRIT: CULTIVATING FAITH,  
COMMUNITY, AND THE LAND*

*“The God of scripture is an agrarian God.”* With this statement, Norman Wirzba invites the reader to explore a new perspective on how God engages with us in and through creation. He also offers directions on how we might engage with God through the nurturing of the earth as a spiritual practice. As the population of the planet increasingly urbanizes, the challenges we face requires that we encounter the earth, watersheds, and species as sacred gifts.

This book starts out as a very broad ranging and dense exploration of agrarianism, it is strongly influenced by writer Wendell Berry, and it includes some analysis of the racism that has excluded many from accessing the land. It then leads to an outline of “agrarian spiritual exercises” that deepen this exploration of connecting with God through creation as gift.



**Ayana Elizabeth Johnson**

*WHAT IF WE GET IT RIGHT? VISIONS OF  
CLIMATE FUTURE*



This book is a wonderfully **positive and hopeful exploration of climate and ecological solutions** that is deeply personal for author and marine biologist Ayana Elizabeth Johnson.

It starts with her personal story of falling in love with coral reefs as a child and exploring the water in her father's country of origin, Jamaica, in the context of the racism that made her path more unlikely.

This book has a wonderfully casual style, not shying away from the harsh realities of the climate crisis, but also choosing to explore what visioning a better future could involve, through interviews with environmental activists, film makers, fishers, farmers, artists, and others.

It is a creative and energizing approach to looking at the climate emergency head on with hope.





## *Sisters of St. Martha*

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## CSM MISSION STATEMENT

*We Sisters of St. Martha, inspired by God's graciousness,  
hear, embrace, and respond to the cry for Gospel Hospitality.*