

*Sisters of St. Martha  
of Antigonish*



**2021-2022**

**MARTHA MINISTRY  
OF SPIRITUALITY**

*Opportunities for Spiritual Growth*



*“Yes, Now as they went on their way,  
he entered a certain village, where a  
woman named Martha welcomed him  
into her home. (Luke 10: 38)*

Because of our belief in Jesus, and the call to live our charism of Gospel Hospitality, we are grateful that during this challenging COVID-19 journey, we continue with faith and undaunted hope the Martha Ministry of Spirituality through Marian Community.

Jesus took many journeys throughout Palestine with his friends. Our Christian Scriptures chronicle their journeys and tell amazing stories of how the Spirit of God moved among them and of how Jesus related with people in all walks of life. Many of our presentations this year have to do with journey: contemplative journey through the Tides of Time, journey with the mystics into the Heart of God, walking the Camino de Santiago, journey in the global community in search of Justice, living *Laudato Si'* through loving creation, and being attentive to the ongoing journey and evolution of Catholic Social Teaching.

Being engaged in the many aspects of journey requires that we take time, as Jesus did, to be attentive to the voice of God. Or, as he did at the home of Martha, to relax, relate and share the faith we treasure. We try to provide opportunities to “Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps. 46: 10) by holding Centering Prayer gatherings every two weeks, inviting people to engage together in Holy Listening and providing time of Sabbath practice through an Oasis day of retreat on a regular basis. Another opportunity to be open to God is provided for those who wish to have a time of retreat and a prayer experience in one of our Hermitages. If you would like a guide on the journey, Spiritual Accompaniment is provided on request.

**We are looking forward to sharing Gospel Hospitality  
with you!**

*Sr. Claire Mac Neil,  
Director, Martha Ministry of Spirituality*

*Due to COVID-19, the location of group meetings  
and workshops may be subject to change.*

# Year-at-a-Glance

## GROUPS

### Centering Prayer

**Fridays @ 10 a.m. at Bethany Resource Centre**

Sep 10, 24 ♦ Oct 8, 22 ♦ Nov 5, 19 ♦ Dec 3, 17 ♦ Jan 7, 21  
Feb 4, 18 ♦ Mar 4, 18 ♦ Apr 1, 22 ♦ May 6, 20 ♦ Jun 3, 17, 24

### Oasis Days

**Wednesdays @ 9:45 a.m. at Marian Community**

Sep 15 ♦ Oct 13 ♦ Nov 10 ♦ Dec 8  
Jan 12 ♦ Feb 9 ♦ Mar 9 ♦ Apr 13 ♦ May 11 ♦ Jun 8

### Holy Listening

**Wednesdays @ 10 a.m. at Marian Community**

Oct 6 ♦ Nov 3 ♦ Dec 1  
Jan 5 ♦ Feb 2 ♦ Mar 2 ♦ Apr 6 ♦ May 4 ♦ Jun 1

## WORKSHOPS

***Contemplating Nature: How I Wrote The Tides of Time***

September 20 @ 9:30-11:30

***The Cosmic Walk: Rooted in Wonder***

October 25 @ 6:30-9:30

***Mystics and the Mystical Traditions of the Church***

November 1, 8, 15 @ 9:30-12:00

***Walking the Camino de Santiago***

November 18 @ 6:30-9:30

**Introductory Workshop on Centering Prayer**

November 22 @ 10:00-4:00

***Gospel Hospitality, Martha Presence and Mission at the UN***

March 21 @ 6:30-9:30

**Deepening in Centering Prayer Workshop**

March 28 @ 10:00-4:00

***Spirituality, Social Justice, and Love of Creation – Living Laudato Si'***

April 4 @ 6:30 – 9:30

***The Journey Continues: a Quick trip through  
the Evolution of Catholic Social Teaching***

TBA @ 6:30-9:30

# Centering Prayer



*"Be still and know  
that I am God."*

Psalm 46:10

**Two Fridays a month 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
@ Bethany Resource Centre**

Cost: Donation

**FACILITATORS: SR. CLAIRE MAC NEIL & TEAM**

Twice a month, the Centering Prayer Community meets to listen to the word of God in Scripture through the practice of Lectio Divina (Divine Reading) which nurtures contemplative prayer. The source of Centering Prayer is the Indwelling Trinity. Its practice consists in responding to the call of the Holy Spirit to consent to the Divine presence and action in our lives. After the prayer with Scripture and the practice of Centering, we have a time of instruction on Centering Prayer and Spirituality which includes conversation about living the Christian Life in our current church and world situation. New members are always welcome.

**2021:** September 10 & 24, October 8 & 22, November 5 & 19,  
December 3 & 17

**2022:** January 7, 21, February 4 & 18, March 4, & 18, April 1 & 22,  
May 6 & 20, June 3 & 17 & 24

## WORKSHOPS

**Time: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm @ Marian Community**

Cost: \$25/day with lunch (depending on current health protocols)

**FACILITATORS: SR. CLAIRE MAC NEIL & TEAM**

### **Introductory Workshop on Centering Prayer Monday, November 22**

This Christian prayer form is a way of letting go and growing in the ability to wait upon and rest in God's presence. The day provides input, the practice of centering prayer, and discussion. The workshop could also act as a refresher for those who are already practicing Centering Prayer.

### **Deepening in Centering Prayer Workshop Monday, March 28**

This is a follow-up process for those who have already taken the Introductory Workshop and for those who have been praying using the Centering Prayer practice for months or years.

## Oasis Days

*Come and enjoy a time to be,  
a time to pray,  
a time to rest!*

These are days of prayer, reflection, some sharing and ritual, using themes following the seasons of nature and of the liturgical year. Participants find that these are grace-filled days where we assist each other on our spiritual journey. We will use some material written by Sr. Joyce Rupp during our day of prayer. There is opportunity for spiritual direction if you so desire.

**Wednesdays 9:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m**

**@ Marian Community**

Cost: \$30 with lunch (depending on current health protocols)

Pre-registration: call 902-863-4726 or 902-863-4822

**FACILITATOR: SR. CLAIRE MAC NEIL**

### 2021

September 15	<i>The music of God in life and work</i>
October 13	<i>Autumn Transformation</i>
November 10	<i>God's faithfulness</i>
December 8	<i>Advent, a homecoming</i>

### 2022

January 12	<i>Looking back-looking forward</i>
February 9	<i>Believing in the dance of life</i>
March 9	<i>God is our shelter</i>
April 13	<i>The waters of life</i>
May 11	<i>Seeking the One who seeks us</i>
June 8	<i>Transforming Spirit</i>



**Claire Mac Neil** is a Sister of St. Martha and the Director of Martha Ministry of Spirituality. After years of spreading the Word through teaching at various levels and being in ministry as a Pastoral Assistant and Liturgy Coordinator, she was called to Retreat ministry and has been engaged in that ministry for many years. She holds an MA degree in Spirituality and is privileged and happy to use the gifts she has to help people on their journey with God.

# Holy Listening



*New group!*

Holy Listening, or group spiritual direction, is a process in which people gather on a regular basis to assist each other in reflection on the awareness of God in their life. This process is limited to four people plus the facilitator. Please call Sr. Claire at 902-863-4726 for more information and a short interview.

**Time: 10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Wednesdays**

Cost: \$50 for the year

2021: October 6   November 3   December 1

2022: January 5   February 2   March 2   April 6   May 4   June 1



## Spiritual Direction

### *Come as You Are*

*You don't have to pray at all, or pray well, or feel that you are close to God or even living the life you want to. Spiritual direction is a very simple process of putting out what you want and most deeply desire and having someone respond to that and help you to live from what you really want. So, come as you are and at least try it."*

~ Sister Mary Ann Scofield

The above quote from Sr. Mary Ann, one of the founders of *Spiritual Directors International*, has put in a few words what we believe about Spiritual Direction.

The goal of spiritual accompaniment is not to tell a person what to do but to help one become more aware of God's presence and activity in one's life, with a view to making choices in fidelity to that awareness. It is a way of providing support for the spiritual journey.

Spiritual direction is a confidential, one-on-one encounter lasting about an hour. Claire Mac Neil, CSM is available to anyone who wishes a spiritual companion as they search for the many ways God is present and active in their personal journey. Claire is a trained spiritual director and has years of experience giving retreats and helping people journey in the mystery of God.

To contact Sr. Claire for an appointment or to inquire about the dynamic, please call at  
902- 863-4726 or 902-863-4822  
or email at [cmacneilcsm@gmail.com](mailto:cmacneilcsm@gmail.com)

**Spiritual Direction is also available through Zoom.**

There is no set fee for Spiritual Direction.  
A donation would be appreciated to assist in the  
Martha Ministry of Spirituality.

# MINISTRY OF SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOPS

Cost: \$20/day

Location: Bethany Resource Centre

Registration: 902-863-4726 or  
902-863-4822

## Contemplating Nature: How I Wrote The Tides of Time

September 20, 2021, 9:30a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

PRESENTER: SUZANNE STEWART

This presentation will focus on Suzanne Stewart's nonfiction book, *The Tides of Time: A Nova Scotia Book of Seasons*, which traces, month by month, the seasonal harvests and labours in rural northeastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, an idea that she derived from a Medieval prayer book, *The Book of Hours*. Throughout the presentation, Suzanne will give a selection of readings from the book, from various months and seasons. She will also talk about the process of composing this work: her encounters with the real-life characters and rural settings, as well as the challenges (and joys) of writing itself. Additionally, Suzanne will explore relationships between the content of the book and several biblical themes: the Christian conception of Creation; the sacredness of time; and the spirituality of a journey.

## The Cosmic Walk: Rooted in Wonder

October 25, 2021, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

PRESENTER: SR. DONNA BRADY

Have you ever wondered how a creative Creator works? Science has been able to pinpoint some of the steppingstones on this journey. Come join us as we explore the wonder of our world by walking this Cosmic Walk back through time.

## Mystics and the Mystical Tradition of the Church

November 1, & 8, & 15, 2021, 9:30a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

PRESENTER: SHEILA O'HANDLEY

At heart we are all mystics. Throughout the world today we are experiencing a renewal of the mystical and an interest in the mystics. The mystical wisdom which resides in our hearts is nudging us also to a greater awareness of the mystics that we are. Come and meet some of the mystics. They will affirm you to trust what is already present within you—the mystical life.

## **Walking the Camino de Santiago**

**November 18, 2021, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

**PRESENTERS: ERNST AND KAREN SCHUEGRAF**

Reflections from a couple who walked the Camino, from the perspective of a pilgrimage.

## **Gospel Hospitality, Martha Presence and Mission at the United Nations**

**March 21, 2022, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

**PRESENTER: SR. MARION SHERIDAN**

This time together will be a blend of input and group sharing —if you wish. Input will be: our understanding of Gospel Hospitality, brief history of the United Nations and Sustainable Development Goals and the world of the UN. Why would you attend? Each of us is a global citizen; in the light of Gospel Hospitality and the UN Agenda 2030, we are all invited to live the motto “no one will be left behind”.

## **Spirituality, Social Justice, and Love of Creation – Living *Laudato Si'***

**April 4, 2022, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

**PRESENTER: DARLENE O'LEARY**

*This presentation will highlight the importance of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* in enriching our spiritual lives and our understanding of hearing and responding to the “cry of the Earth” and the cry of those calling out for dignity and justice. We will explore how *Laudato Si'* contributes to our shift in perspective regarding the climate and how it calls us to act for change in our personal lives and in social advocacy.*

## **The Journey Continues: a Quick trip through the Evolution of Catholic Social Teaching**

**TBA, 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.**

**PRESENTER: SR. JOANNE O'REGAN**

What is Catholic Social Teaching? Where does it come from? Where can I find it? Why don't I hear about it? If you have ever asked yourself these questions, you aren't alone! Catholic Social Teaching has been described as the Church's best kept secret. This session aims to let you in on that secret! We will explore the evolution of Social Thought and Teaching through the lens of Papal Encyclicals, Letters, and the Documents of Vatican II beginning with *Rerum Novarum* through to *Fratelli Tutti*.

## OUR WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

**Sr. Donna Brady** is a Sister of St. Martha. Donna found her world expanding and wonder and awe deepening when the Congregation was introduced to the Universe Story through the work of scientists and theologians. She has a background in adult education and parish ministry. For twelve years, she helped coordinate environmental work for the Marthas and is presently on the Congregation's Leadership Team.



**Sheila O'Handley** is a Diocesan hermit, trained Spiritual Director and Counsellor. Her interest and hope for the future rests in the richness of the Mystics and the Mystical Tradition of the Church.

**Darlene O'Leary** is Coordinator of Martha Justice Ministry. She has a PhD in Theology and Ethics from Saint Paul University in Ottawa. She has worked as the Executive Director of Galilee Centre in Arnnprior, ON. Darlene has also worked with Citizens for Public Justice, an ecumenical faith-based policy organization based in Ottawa. Darlene is grateful to be back in the Maritimes, Mi'kma'ki, where she is from and where generations of her family have lived as guests on this land. She lives in Antigonish with her husband.



**Sr. Joanne O'Regan** is a Sister of St. Martha and is in her second term on the Leadership Team. She has a passion for Catholic Social Teaching, in particular how it informs our understanding of Integral Ecology. Expanding our awareness and examining our assumptions about both are at the heart of Gospel Hospitality. Hopefully, this lens through which to see and experience the world – to see our lives – will aid us in understanding the Gospel message and new ways to experience our faith.

**Ernst Schuegraf** taught computer science at StFX University in his spare time, as he told colleagues at a meeting once. He also had many hobbies, from raising sheep, chickens, ducks, pigs, geese, bees, a big garden and a fruit orchard, to fishing, stained glass, cooking and eating fine food – he has even written a cookbook called *Cooking with the Saints*.



**Karen Schuegraf** has been a homemaker and stay-at-home mum of four children and is an active member of St. Ninian's. She has enjoyed working with dogs and horses and been involved with Christian Unity. She now spends time with her grandchildren and parents, as well as walking, praying and listening to music.



**Sr. Marion Sheridan** is a Sister of St. Martha. She holds a Master's degree in social work. She has worked in that field for many years and in various places. She has also completed a three-year internship in psychoanalytic therapy. She has served on many Boards and was part of founding initiatives to strengthen the communities in which she lived. She has been the Martha NGO Liaison with the Federation of the Sisters of Charity since 2009.

Sr. Marion works from the basis that each of us is a unique human being and a global citizen. She weaves through all this the Martha charism of Gospel Hospitality.

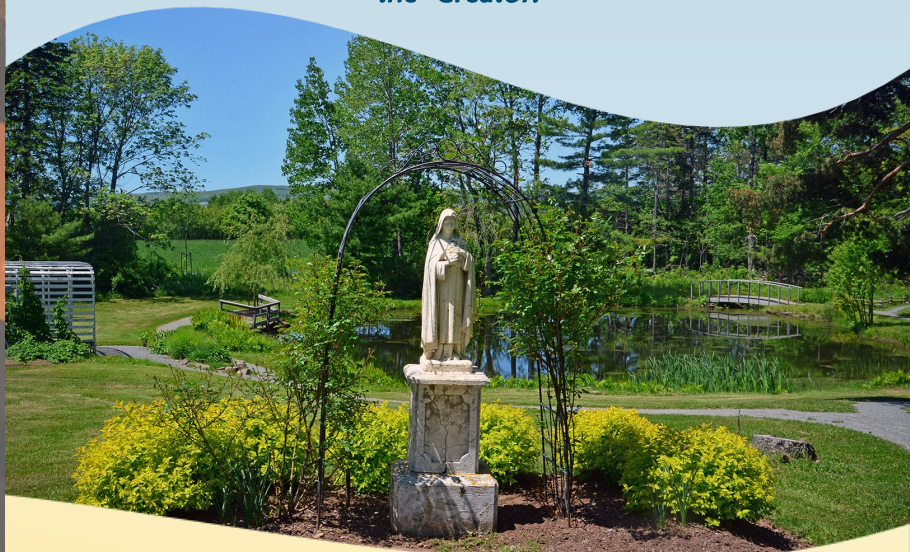
**Suzanne Stewart** embraces life with a deep attachment to literature. *The Tides of Time* published in 2018, was a culmination of her thinking about rural life (studied for years in poetry and fiction) and of her own observations (recorded daily) of the natural beauty in Nova Scotia. In this book, she sought to portray the timelessness (not the disappearance) of the dignity, value, and ingenuity of rural existence, which uniquely encompasses, in this region, both land and water. Also deeply spiritual, Suzanne wished to



weave into the book a Christian understanding of time, in which day-to-day experiences of chronological events are pierced with moments of transcendence. When not writing, Suzanne reads voraciously and teaches part-time in the English Department at StFX University. She also spends long periods out-of-doors: walking, cycling, running, and observing all forms of wildlife (especially, at very early hours in the morning).

## Prayerful pathways for private reflection

*Bethany Grounds provide spaces where individuals can touch into the wonder and beauty of creation realizing the love and care of the Creator.*



### St. Theresa's Garden

The garden invites us to enjoy the delight of a pond, flowerbeds, trees and very friendly squirrels and chickadees. The traditional, devotional Way of the Cross is next to the pond. Across the path, there is a beautiful grotto to Our Lady of Fatima.



### Bethany Arboretum

Bethany property is the home to many beautiful trees. We have chosen 25 trees as Phase I to help you identify and get to know them better. Each tree commemorates persons or events in the history of the Sisters of St. Martha, honouring the deep connection of our shared journey. The Arboretum is an ongoing project which is growing into the future.



## Contemplative Trail

The trail opens up the heart of the wooded area and invites us to be immersed in nature's drama of birth, life, death and new life. Cradling a lake in the centre, it is a home to many plants, animals and birds. Benches along the way are an invitation to sit and marvel. The purpose of this trail is to invite people into stillness and to touch the sacred within and around them.

## Sacred Heart Forest Trail

This short trail brings us from St. Theresa's Garden through very old and gnarled trees in which birds nest and which are their pulpits for proclaiming to the world "God is Here!" The completion of this trail brings one to Sacred Heart Grove.



## Hermitages

*Solitude and silence allow for a new hearing and healing from the stillness and deep connections to God through the beauty and wonder of the Universe.*

Our Hermitages are modern, fully furnished and conducive to contemplation. Inside you'll find cookware, basic food items (tea, coffee), towels and bed linens, refrigerator, stove, microwave, kettle, toaster, and coffee maker. Groceries are not provided but are available at local stores.



### Please note:

- ◆ Reservations are required.
- ◆ A minimum stay of 3 nights is required.
- ◆ The maximum stay is 30 days.
- ◆ Unfortunately, pets cannot be accommodated.
- ◆ All buildings and trails on Bethany Property are smoke-free.
- ◆ Spiritual direction is available upon request.

### Suggested Fees:

\$50/day  
\$350/week  
\$1500/month

Deposit of \$50  
non-refundable & deductible.

Spiritual guidance by donation  
per session.

### **Bethany Grounds provide:**

- ♦ **Access to Eucharist in Chapel at Martha Place, Parkland Antigonish** for those in Hermitages (in accordance with current provincial health protocols).
- ♦ Walking paths in contemplative **St. Theresa's Garden** and the new **Bethany Centennial Garden**.
- ♦ Hiking in the forest: **Sacred Heart Trail** and **Contemplative Trail**.
- ♦ **Labyrinth** (seasonal).



### **Labyrinth**

The labyrinth is a walking prayer, a sacred tool for meditation and reflection used in many religious traditions. It is a symbol for the sacred journey of life. Our labyrinth is located in Bethany Centennial Garden and is mown into the grass.

**To arrange your stay at a hermitage  
contact Martha Ministry of Spirituality  
at 902-863-4726.**





*Sisters of St. Martha*

75 Marian Drive

Antigonish

Nova Scotia B2G 2G6

Canada



From the left: Sr. Jean Harris,  
Sr. Claire MacNeil, Sr. Rosalie Lavallée.

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

## TO INQUIRE OR REGISTER FOR ANY OFFERINGS

- ◆ Call us at 902-863-4726 or 902-863-4822
- ◆ Email us at [spirituality.bethany@themarthas.com](mailto:spirituality.bethany@themarthas.com)
- ◆ Visit us at [www.themarthas.com](http://www.themarthas.com)

