



A MESSAGE FROM THE MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY

From Amy Brierley, former Martha Justice Ministry Coordinator:

The winter season gives us the opportunity to pause and look inwards. As we witness Indigenous land protectors and their allies gathering across the country, standing for their right to sovereignty over their unceded, surrendered territories, we are called to reflect on the ways that our struggles are interconnected. We are called to listen with an open heart and ears to those who are standing

to protect Mother Earth, who are committed to helping our leaders see that protecting Indigenous rights and supporting vibrant livelihoods are one in the same. Let us bring our creativity, love and solidarity to these conversations and bring forward better ways of being in this place now called Canada—creative, sustainable and live-giving ways of generating abundance, that still centre human rights.

MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY (MJM): CORE GROUP

In February 2017, the Core Group met for the first time. It consists of 8 members:
4 Sisters and 4 Lay Collaborators.



Left to right: Sr. Joanne O'Regan, Olga Gladkikh, Mark Overmars, Sr. Franklyn Ferguson, Sr. Marion Sheridan, Sr. Donna Brady. Members of the Core Group missing from the photo are Amy Brierley and Mark Nixon.

Since then, the Core Group has worked on developing a common understanding of the Martha vision, values and mission and the ways in which these understandings form the foundation of our work as the Martha Justice Ministry (MJM). In 2019, we developed and wrote a Statement of Purpose for the Martha Justice Ministry.

MJM STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In pursuit of justice, we strive to work in solidarity with others for immediate and systemic change; to foster and contribute to spaces for dialogue, contemplation and collective actions. Emboldened by our belief in the inherent dignity and interconnectedness of all creation, we strive on the path of right relationship, to contribute to the thriving of peaceful and resilient communities, locally and globally.



MARTHA NEW GROWERS PROGRAM

Each year, between March and December, the fields at Bethany become alive with activity and new growth. Martha New Growers Program is 7 years old and thriving!

In 2011, Sister Florence Kennedy, inspired by the documentary “Dirt! The Movie”, wondered how to connect the Bethany property, once a flourishing farm operated by the Sisters, with Martha values of collaboration, service, justice and stewardship. Together with Sister Donna Brady, they explored the idea of putting in place a one-acre vegetable garden that would attract youth passionate about gardening.

Such a project would address the Congregation’s commitment to sharing values and resources with youth, empowering and developing people, as well as living in right relationship with the land. In 2013, Sisters of St. Martha entered partnership with Jen and David Greenberg, established organic gardeners based in Centre Burlington, NS, to begin an apprenticeship program.



Martha New Growers fields at Bethany Grounds



Jen and David Greenberg



Martha New Growers Program focuses on vegetable production that is economically viable and environmentally friendly. Throughout the season, the new growers gain experience and confidence in small scale market gardening. The Greenbergs are program managers and mentors while the Sisters provide the land and the support structures for season extension. In 2017, CSM opened another acre to allow for more growers.



2019 NEW GROWERS: SAYING GOODBYE TO ELI AND MICHELLE

In November 2019, we gathered at Martha Place to celebrate Eli Milton and Michelle Moore after a successful season with the New Growers.

We are so proud of everything Eli and Michelle have accomplished throughout the season! Their growth was inspiring! They contributed so much to the program—their creativity, perseverance, love of the land and, of course, their dedication to growing ecologically sound food for the community.

Even though this was Michelle's first season growing at this scale, she was successful in producing a variety of crops and connecting with the community at the Antigonish Farmer's Market. In Eli's second year with the New Growers, she grew in her leadership in every element of market garden operation. She deepened and expanded her growing practices, taking on new challenges, and has established herself at several Farmers' Markets, including Mabou and New Glasgow.



Left to right: Eli Milton, Sister Theresa Perro and Michelle Moore at Martha Place

THE SIGNING OF 2020 MARTHA NEW GROWERS

On February 15th, the New Growers for 2020, signed up as two teams: Olivia Gowan and Andrew McGillicuddy, and Alaa Abo Alhawa and Osama Sulaiman.



Left to right: Olivia Gowan, Andrew McGillicuddy, Osama Sulaiman, Alaa Abo Alhawa.

The signing was part of a crop planning day. Present were David and Jen Greenberg, program managers and mentors, Sr. Brendalee, Sr. Florence, Sr. Donna, Harry Daemen (supporting Alaa and Osama) and Yannick Laplante, who will be assisting with the program. Sr. Florence gave a brief background on the origin of the Martha New Growers Program and Sr. Brendalee shared how it fits with the CSM Chapter 2019 Direction Statement.

The new growers received the keys to the barn and were taken on a tour of the barn and the garden site – still under snow! They were shown which parts of the garden and the greenhouse they will be planting.



CLIMATE CHANGE MONTH: PEOPLE'S SCHOOL WORKSHOP

In November 2019, StFX University and Antigonish community members held a week of activities regarding climate change. A collaborative workshop on Spirituality and Ecology was presented on Saturday morning, November 16th.

Dr. Adéla Sandness (Buddhism), Jeff Ward (Indigenous Spirituality) and Sister Donna Brady (Christianity), with the assistance of Amy Brierley, prepared a presentation on spirituality and ecology, exploring the topic from the three traditions. The purpose was to give some basic information from each tradition and to invite people into an experience of connecting with a prayer practice to help guide us in our responses to the climate crisis.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Jeff Ward was unable to participate. Approximately 25 people came to the presentation, many of them Sisters of St. Martha, and entered fully into the time of information and prayer. Everyone left more aware of the richness these two traditions (Buddhism and Christianity) bring to the discussion on climate change.



Sr. Donna Brady and Dr. Adéla Sandness led the workshop at People's Place Library in Antigonish

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The new website will:

- have a more contemporary look: lots of images and interactive, updated content;
- be organized in a clear, concise and functional way so it's easy to find information and resources on CSM Ministries and the issues Marthas care about;
- show that CSM is a vital and active congregation;
- convey Martha charism and express Sisters' commitment to the CSM Mission.

Look forward for these changes to the website in the early summer!

We are re-designing the CSM website!