



ADVENT MESSAGE FROM MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY

The Season of Advent is upon us!

It's a time to take stock of the year and reflect on how we have experienced the movement of the Spirit in our lives and in our world.

Certainly, it has been a year of challenges. We are still deep in the global Covid-19 pandemic. We are seeing the impacts of the climate crisis grow more intense. For those already struggling, things are getting harder. So, where do we experience the Spirit and what is the response of justice?

I've been so inspired by local and global movements of youth, Indigenous land defenders, faith communities, and civil society organizations working so hard to protect the planet, to love creation and their neighbours, and to work to change unjust systems. So much good work is being done!

I hope you find stories of inspiration to guide you each day of Advent.

Please continue to pray for and support those working for justice, peace, and love of creation.

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



Darlene O'Leary



CATHOLIC CHURCH AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

In response to a request following the finding of unmarked graves in Kamloops, BC, Martha Justice Ministry offered three 2-hour sessions titled, “The Catholic Church and Residential Schools; What We Know, What We Need to Learn” facilitated by Sr. Donna Brady.

A group of participants gathered for each session, and our discussion raised the questions of how men and women religious who dedicated their lives to the care of others could be part of something so destructive. It also included topics of the relationship between the Church and Government and the awareness or lack of awareness of the culture and spirituality of Indigenous People.

The group watched and discussed a

documentary revealing a little-known part of Church history: the Doctrine of Discovery, a Vatican directive from the 15th century that set the stage for the injustices of colonization and residential schools to unfold.

Our discussions and sharing made us aware that individually and as a Church there is much we need to learn and do to bring about reconciliation, but the interest and commitment of the group was strong.

SEASON OF CREATION EVENT

On Sunday, Oct 3rd, a small group gathered in St. Theresa’s Garden, Bethany Grounds, to celebrate the Season of Creation.

Season of Creation is a month-long celebration of creation from September 1st to October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Our prayerful gathering focussed on the theme “*A Home for All: Renewing the Oikos of God*” and how we live “radical hospitality” with all of creation. We shared in prayer, song, and thanksgiving for creation, reflecting on the beauty and wonder of all creation and how we are in deep relationship.



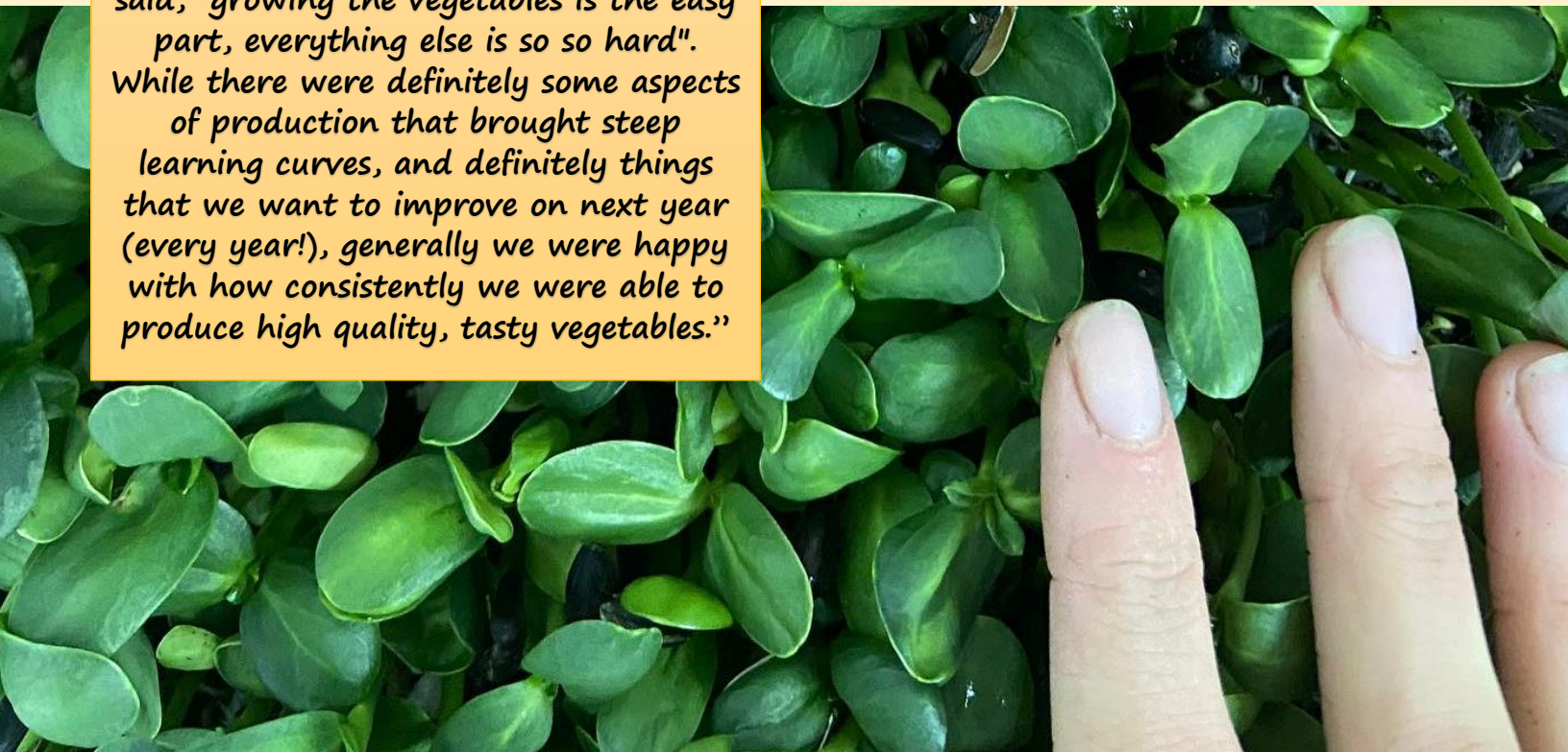


MARTHA NEW GROWERS UPDATE

Martha New Growers had a busy and plentiful season. As fall comes to an end and the growing season is winding down, Meaghan and David are far from done: they are extending their time at Bethany till late winter and will be growing microgreens!

Meghan and David kept people updated via weekly emails describing their experience and updating on their produce for a given week. Below are the excerpts from their November 21st, 2021 message: Meghan's reflection on their time at Bethany.

"People have been asking us how the season went. It's a hard thing to summarize eight months in a few sentences. If you asked me in May how things were going I would have probably said, "growing the vegetables is the easy part, everything else is so so hard". While there were definitely some aspects of production that brought steep learning curves, and definitely things that we want to improve on next year (every year!), generally we were happy with how consistently we were able to produce high quality, tasty vegetables."



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NEWS



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MARTHA NEW GROWERS UPDATE *continued*



"The thing about starting a farm is that you are not just starting to grow vegetables, you are also starting a business. For us, right during the busy spring production season we were simultaneously trying to learn how to do bookkeeping, register a business, and market vegetables in a community which was new to us. All of those things were definitely difficult at first but with time have become easier. Living in a new town is also always a challenge but we have started to make more connections in the past couple of months which has made it easier."



Meghan Johnny and David Matheson

"Overall we are really happy with what we have accomplished this year and grateful to everyone who helped us get to this place. We are feeling positive about "digging in" again next year and continuing to build a business that is aligned with our values and goals. Our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported us in any way this summer, whether it was ordering a harvest box or answering a teary phone call, we really couldn't have done it without you."



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COP26 ECUMENICAL DELEGATION

This fall, Martha Justice Ministry had the opportunity to be part of an ecumenical virtual delegation to COP26, which took place between Oct 31st and Nov 12th. This was an official delegation of the United Church of Canada and For the Love of Creation, an ecumenical organization working on climate justice.

For The Love of Creation &
The United Church of Canada



Virtual Ecumenical
Delegation to COP26,
the UN Conference on
Climate Change

Top: Nelson Lee, Mennonite Central Committee, Vancouver, BC; Rev. Alecia Greenfield, Anglican Church of Canada, Vancouver, BC; Stephanie Stringer, Development and Peace and the Anglican Church of Canada, Montreal, QC; Darlene O'Leary, Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish, Antigonish, NS. Bottom: Janet Gray, The United Church of Canada and KAIROS, Victoria, BC; Sabrina Chiefari, Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, Toronto, ON; Karri Munn-Venn, Citizens for Public Justice, Luskville, QC; Tony Snow, The United Church of Canada, Calgary, AB.

The climate COP, which stands for **Conference of the Parties**, is an annual United Nations multilateral gathering of heads of state, global country representatives, civil society organizations, and others who come together to work on ways to address the climate crisis. COP26 is the 26th gathering, and this year it was hosted by the United Kingdom in Glasgow.

As a delegation, we were able to participate in sessions, including public virtual events with heads of state and public side events (Green Zone) and some

closed events involving country representatives (Blue Zone). We also came together daily to share what networks on the ground in Glasgow were seeing and hearing and to share our impressions of daily events and announcements.

Our delegation hoped to see significant commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from countries, financial support for countries in the Global South struggling already with the impacts of the climate crisis, and support for Indigenous communities in guiding the global climate response.



COP26 ECUMENICAL DELEGATION *continued*

While the conference outcome document, the **Glasgow Climate Pact**, made a few steps forward, including the first ever mention of fossil fuels as a contributor to global emissions in a COP document, there were significant disappointments, including the weakening of commitments to phase out coal production.

Our delegation expressed feelings of disappointment in the lack of urgency by developed countries, including Canada, to move forward quickly on climate commitments. However, we were inspired

and uplifted by the initiatives of movements and organizations around the world leading the way on climate solutions, particularly Indigenous and faith communities. Two sessions that stood out in these areas were a session hosted by **Indigenous Clean Energy** from Canada and **Catholics@COP** hosted by the **Laudato Si' Movement**.

The four goals of the COP26:

- 1. Secure net zero emissions by 2050 and keep 1.5C in reach**
- 2. Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats**
- 3. Mobilize finance**
- 4. Work together to deliver**



You can find COP26 daily newsletters by Darlene with highlights, stories, impressions, and reflections on MJM News page on our website.

Being part of the COP26 delegation was a wonderful learning experience that brought together faith communities from across Canada to witness a global gathering at such a moment of urgency. Our **daily newsletters** were an effort to bring everyone into this process of witness and of shared love of creation. Following on COP26, Martha Justice Ministry will continue to work with delegation partners and our ecology and climate justice networks for further education and advocacy on this issue.



BASIC INCOME IN ATLANTIC CANADA

This fall, Martha Justice Ministry and the Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition have been involved in webinars coordinated by the Tamarack Institute on basic income in Atlantic Canada.



Basic income guarantee (BIG), or a guaranteed livable income, is an income security measure that would ensure that no one falls below the poverty line, through government income support.

The webinars have been an opportunity to bring together those working on basic income in each of the Atlantic provinces, and to see where there might be areas to collaborate and build support.

As part of the commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda's 2030 call to "leave no one behind", basic income is one element of a poverty eradication program that must be comprehensive to address systemic poverty, including affordable housing, healthcare, childcare, and food security.

JPIC ATLANTIC GATHERING

This fall, we had our first Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Atlantic Gathering (virtually) in some time! It was a wonderful opportunity to come together and share the great JPIC work is being done in religious congregations in the region.

The gathering included a session on ways of collaboration and priority areas for JPIC work, as well as a focussed session on *Laudato Si'* and ways communities are engaging in the **Action Platform**, along with navigating the many initiatives for faith communities on ecology and climate justice.

Many thanks to Sabrina di Matteo and the Canadian Religious Conference for hosting and facilitating, as well as the organizing committee for planning the gathering.



DIGNITY FOR ALL LETTER

Martha Justice Ministry signed a letter from *Dignity for All* asking MPs and Senators to pledge to end poverty and inequity in Canada.



The campaign was founded in 2009 by Canada Without Poverty and Citizens for Public Justice.

Fragment of the *Pledge: End Inequity, End Poverty*:

Specifically, I pledge to support the legislation of the following targets, along with adequate federal investments and action plans:

- ◆ Ensure sustainable access to **safe drinking water** by 2023 and to adequate, culturally appropriate, **nutritious food** in the territories and on reserves by 2025. Eliminate **food insecurity** for all by 2030.
- ◆ Establish a **minimum income floor** for all people living in Canada, bringing them up to 60% of the median income of all Canadians by 2025.
- ◆ Eliminate **core housing need and homelessness** by 2030, tracking data to ensure equitable progress along the way. Close the gap in funding for rural vs urban housing and homelessness immediately.

- ◆ Eliminate **unmet medical needs** due to financial constraints by expanding Canada's public health care system to include in-community, culturally appropriate access to publicly funded pharmacare, mental health, dental, vision, and physiotherapy by 2025.
- ◆ Ensure all families can access affordable, flexible, accessible, publicly funded, and culturally appropriate **early learning and childcare**, investing in the creation of additional subsidized spaces and fair compensation for staff by 2025.
- ◆ Close the gaps in **employment rates and pay equity** experienced by equity-seeking groups by 2030.

The full letter and a digital sign-on form is available at <https://dignityforall.ca/pledge-for-mps-and-senators/>



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LAUDATO SI' MOVEMENT LETTER

Martha Justice Ministry signed a statement from the Laudato Si' Movement, signed by over 60 Catholic organizations globally, to ensure a strong final agreement from COP26.

As Catholics, united for our common home, we urgently ask leaders at the United Nations 26th Climate Change Conference to follow Pope Francis' leadership in reaching a prophetic final agreement.

The science is clear: an extractive, unsustainable economy, fueled by fossil fuels, is causing the climate crisis that's destroying God's creation and harming the most vulnerable among us the most, those who have done little to cause the crisis.

We owe it to our poorest sisters and brothers, future generations, and all of God's creation to seize this historic opportunity. In 2015, Pope Francis wrote in Laudato Si' that fossil fuels need "to be progressively replaced without delay." Now, in 2021, we have reached a decisive moment. We must reach an agreement in Glasgow that sets a **clear and ambitious timeline for a just transition away from harmful fossil fuels.** Setting out such a pathway is an essential step to accelerating investment in a clean energy future for all.

As Catholics, we have other priorities for the final agreement as well, including recognizing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and keeping the commitment of 1.5 degrees. It is also essential that the final declaration reaffirms the commitment to climate finance for adaptation, as well as loss and damage.

But above all, a final agreement must deliver on a clear pathway forward to a just transition away from an extractive economy based on fossil fuels, the root cause of the climate crisis. We will continue working and praying for that prophetic outcome.

SOURCE

Laudato Si' Movement letter:
<https://laudatosimovement.org/2021/11/12/catholic-organizations-issue-statement-on-cop26-draft-agreement/>



**LAUDATO SI'
MOVEMENT** formerly
Global Catholic
Climate Movement