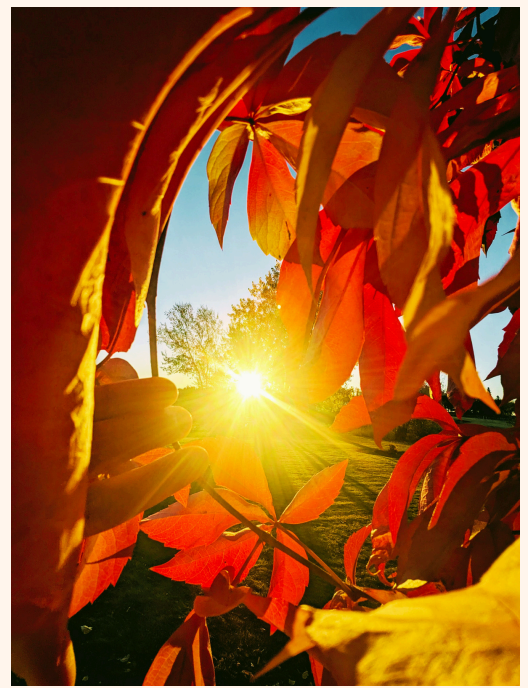


NEWSLETTER

FALL - 2024



By Lise Schmidt, Martha Retreat Centre Board President

Dear Friends of the Martha Retreat Centre, It's so difficult for me to wrap my mind around the fact that we will soon be bringing 2024 to a close! Where did the time go?

The Board of Directors has had another busy year and continues to evolve as we

work towards moving the Centre forward. This past year has seen us bring a few changes to our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, we have been reviewing our Policy Handbook, and we have begun work on our upcoming Fund Development Campaign. All of this important governance work goes on "behind the scenes", so to speak, in order that you may enjoy the wonderful programs, retreats and volunteer opportunities.

Of course, the Board's work is only one portion of what happens at the Centre. It is with most heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation that we recognize the work done on the "front lines" by Diana, Irena, Mich, and our volunteers!! Without them, the Centre would not be as vibrant as it is today!

I would also like to deeply thank Fr. Tim Boyle and Deacon Bob Williston who have worked together to provide beautiful masses twice a month in our chapel. Deacon Bob leads the music ministry at mass and also leads us, once a month, for Taize with his wonderful



wife Joan. Fr. Tim provides us with his guidance in so many aspects of running the Centre and we appreciate his wisdom!

Everything you enjoy at the Centre would not be possible without the support and prayers of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish, NS. We are

forever grateful for their backing, their time, their guidance, their wisdom, and their prayers. Srs. Theresa Parker and Elizabeth Riopelle provide great insight as Board Directors!

We enjoyed watching Diana's dream of the Contemplative Food Garden grow for its first full harvest season this year! Our biggest "treat" was to have Srs. Josephine Keizer and Theresa Parker in Lethbridge in September to see for themselves how the Centre is making use of this beautiful new garden! Both women were extremely happy to see the continued progress of the Centre as well as to have the opportunity to see some familiar friends! We were extremely thankful for their visit!!

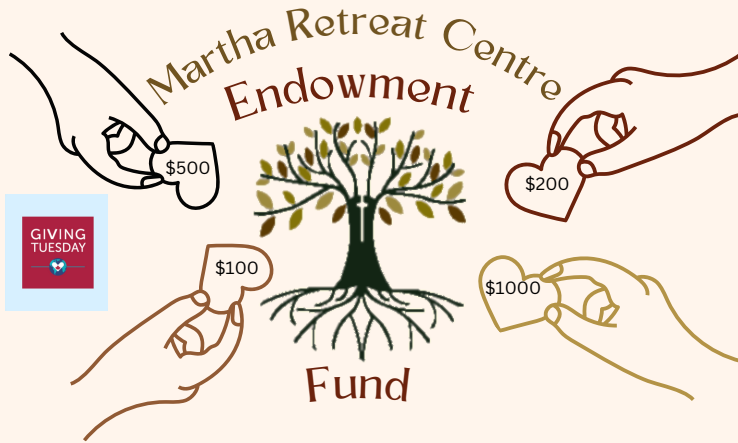
2025 will see the Board working towards building a sustainability fund in order to help us gain independence from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Martha by August, 2026. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary year of the Sisters of St. Martha hosting

their first retreat for community members, it is my sincere hope that you will help us continue running the Centre for another 50 years!

Please know that the Board and staff truly appreciate your attendance at programs, your volunteerism, your

financial support, and your prayers. The Centre exists FOR YOU!

May you find stillness, peace, good health and much love in your life!



JOIN GIVINGTUESDAY, THE WORLD'S LARGEST GENEROSITY MOVEMENT. EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO GIVE AND EVERY ACT OF GENEROSITY COUNTS.

"I see a strong future for the Centre. Building on the legacy of the Sisters of St. Martha to meet the needs of the people in our community, together we will continue to impact our community in a positive way through influencing people's lives. The environment of the Centre continues to nurture spiritual well-being, offering rest, reflection and renewal through contemplative practices."



Diana Sim
Executive Director

Could you donate \$100 to Martha Retreat Centre on Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2024?

If everyone contributed \$100 to \$1,000, we could build a \$510,000 Endowment Fund, securing a strong future for the Centre!

Martha Retreat Centre 2023-2024: A Year of Growth and Gratitude

Did you know?

- **Over 5,000 Guests:** This year, over 5,200 guests visited the Centre, sharing in moments of peace and reflection.
- **Reaching Hearts Worldwide:** We sent 17,982 newsletters, keeping our community connected and informed.
- **Dedicated Support:** 87 volunteers and groups contributed their time and care to support our mission year-round.
- **Global Presence:** Our website saw visitors from 506 cities across Canada and around the world, reflecting our growing reach.
- **Generous Giving:** We are grateful for nearly 100 donors, including 21 who contribute monthly to sustain our programs.
- **Engaging Events:** Over the past year, we hosted more than 70 retreats and community gatherings, bringing 4,354 people together to explore peace, spirituality, and personal growth.
- **Community Connections:** The Centre also welcomed 27 external bookings with 483 attendees, building bridges with other groups.



Diana continues...

The development of the Contemplative Food Garden over this last year has inspired hope in the fullness of its intention...from garden, to table, to soul. Sponsorship engagement and volunteer efforts have impacted the lives of over 300 people. We have served fresh produce to program guests, we have sold produce to 30 supporters and we contributed over 430 pounds of fresh produce to local food banks.

I was showing a friend the garden one day when a woman rode up on her bicycle just "to look at the beautiful garden, it is so abundant...job well done!" A complete stranger received joy from the beauty created in our own back yard.

Impact! This little gem on the edge of the coulees is a magnificent gift to all those who come. Together, we will pave the way for ourselves and our future guests.

Join me by making a financial contribution to the development of our Endowment fund. This fund will replace the financial support of the Sisters of St. Martha for years to come. The Sisters have asked that we show sustainability of the Centre by August 2026. I invite you to participate on this journey by making a financial contribution for Giving Tuesday this year.

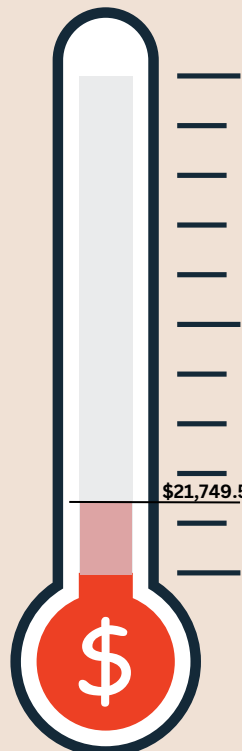
HOW TO CONTRIBUTE:

- **Cash or Cheque:** Donations can be mailed or delivered directly to the Centre.
- **E-transfer:** Send your donation to Director@martharetreatcentre.ca.
- **Online through our Website:** Check our Donate button for easy online donations.
- **CanadaHelps:** Donate securely on CanadaHelps, where you can also make gifts of securities. 
- **ATB Employees via Benevity:** ATB staff can donate through Benevity, with matched contributions! (If your organization uses Benevity, reach out to see about getting Martha Retreat Centre added to your workplace's charity list).

Thank you for supporting Martha Retreat Centre's mission!

OUR OPERATING FUNDRAISING GOAL 2024-2025:

\$120,00.00



thank you

Thank you to over 80 volunteers who contributed over 3720 hours, an economic impact of over \$100,500.00. We could not accomplish all that we do without YOU!

Thank you to our monthly donors. We have seen an increase from 6 monthly donors to 21 monthly donors bringing in \$2,320.00 per month.

Our retreat leaders and facilitators, whose generous wisdom and guidance inspire and uplift all who visit.

Thank you to all 5,200 wonderful guests and visitors for being part of Martha Retreat Centre!

MARTHA RETREAT CENTRE - EXCITING UPCOMING RETREATS

• DEEPENING CENTERING PRAYER RETREAT

Thu, Jan 23, 7:00 pm – Sun, Jan 26, 1:00 pm, 2025

Join us for a transformative three-day intensive retreat designed to enrich your practice of Centering Prayer and deepen your relationship with the living Christ. Includes daily Centering Prayer, meditation walks, and teachings from Thomas Keating and Richard Rohr. New to Centering Prayer? Attend the orientation on Thu, Jan 23, 6:00 – 7:00 pm. Facilitator: Pat Boehm. Cost: \$485.00 (3 nights accommodations and meals included).

• DEEPENING INTO SILENCE RETREAT

Fri, Jan 31, 7:00 pm – Sun, Feb 2, 1:00 pm

Join us for a pilgrimage into Silence, as you discover Silence as a companioning presence within, guiding you in your life and spiritual journey. This is an opportunity for those who might be new to a silent retreat, as well as those who want to deepen their experience. Together, we will hold a spacious silence for each other in a safe and supportive community. Facilitator: Vickie MacArthur. Cost: \$360 (includes live-in accommodations), \$270 (for commuters).

• LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION RETREAT

Friday, February 7, 7:00 pm – Sunday, February 9, 1:00 pm

The ancient spiritual practice of meditating on Loving kindness allows us to focus on generating thoughts of loving kindness, friendliness, goodwill, benevolence and non-violence towards ourselves, those near and dear to us and ultimately all of creation. There will be periods of sitting and walking meditation plus instructional talks. Beginners are welcome. Facilitator: Bob Campbell. Cost: \$360 (meals and 2 nights accommodations included).

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Board Member:** The Martha Retreat Centre is seeking passionate and dedicated individuals to join our Board of Directors. If you are inspired by our mission to provide an inclusive space for spiritual growth, reflection, and community, we would love to hear from you! This is a wonderful opportunity to make a meaningful difference in our community. If you are interested or know someone who might be interested in building our ministry, please contact us
- **Fund Development Team** needs volunteers. Do you like organizing and helping with fundraising activities, planning donation campaigns and events? Are you a creative thinker? Email or call us for more details.
- Join **Prayer Team** – in communion through prayer to nourish the wellbeing of those who seek spiritual strength as they are invited to experience the mission of the Centre. Email with interest, first meeting will be scheduled.
- **Hospitality Team:** Are you passionate about creating a warm, welcoming, and peaceful environment? Our Hospitality Team is dedicated to setting the ambiance for a restful retreat experience, helping visitors feel at home and at peace. Whether you enjoy greeting guests, preparing spaces, or simply lending a helping hand, there's a place for you!

Donate
online →



Become
a volunteer →



1130 Scenic Drive South,
Lethbridge, AB, T1K 7J1



admin@martharetreatcentre.ca



403-328-3422

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www.martharetreatcentre.ca

Martha Retreat Centre Donation Form

FULL NAME

EMAIL ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

MAILING ADDRESS

PAYMENT METHOD

- Credit Card
 - Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: ____ / ____ CVV: _____
- E-transfer to: director@martharetreatcentre.ca
- Cheque (payable to Martha Retreat Centre)
- Cash (in-person donations)

All donations, big or small, are deeply appreciated and make a significant impact. Thank You for Supporting the Martha Retreat Centre!

☐ My GivinigTuesday2024 donation_____

☐ I am sending my yearend donation of \$_____ to the Centre.

☐ Contribute \$_____ to Endowment Fund

☐ I would like to donate monthly to the Centre, send me more information on the Preauthorized Giving.

☐ I would like to increase my monthly donation to the Centre to a total of \$_____, send me the paperwork I need to complete to make this happen.

☐ I make a faith pledge of \$_____ by date _____ as an expression of faith and a personal response to God's generosity.

(Trust God for your pledge and track the ways He gives through you.)

☐ I would like to receive a tax receipt.

☐ I would like to receive occasional updates about the Centre.