

NEWSLETTER

SPRING - 2024



Celebrating 50 Years, Creating 50 Years...

By Lise Schmidt, Martha Retreat Centre Board President



The Martha Retreat Centre Society is extremely blessed to be celebrating the 50 year anniversary of the first retreat run at the Centre, in October 1974, by the Sisters of St. Martha.

Over these last fifty years thousands of people have participated in retreats and programs at the Centre. So many people have come to the Centre for various reasons. It is with awe that I wonder exactly “how” people’s lives were touched and changed since 1974! We are truly blessed to have had a strong foundation built by the Sisters of St. Martha which we still use today in planning our programs. This foundation – centered around Gospel Hospitality – serves the Society as a guide in all we do.

As we celebrate these last fifty years, we are also looking forward to the next fifty years! You may hear “Celebrating 50 Years, Creating 50 Years” around the Centre. It is our hope that you will join us in a few events we’ll be hosting in 2024.

Our nine weekly P.A.L. lunches begin at the end of May as does our first of this summer’s Music on the Grounds. You are invited to join us on May 30th as we celebrate the grand opening of our Contemplative Food Garden. This food garden will not only provide the Centre with vegetables to be served for our programs, but we are also looking forward to donating some of our produce to local food banks as we did last fall with the extra produce we had grown.

We invite you to join us in helping create another vibrant 50 years of programming at the Martha Retreat Centre! Please come by to enjoy a P.A.L. lunch, a Music on the Grounds performance, a wonderful program and/or to appreciate our beautifully tended grounds.

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Psalm 100:4

The SIMple Life

By Diana Sim, Martha Retreat Centre Executive Director

This week I had the need to stop, pause and reflect on a situation that was calling for change.

The easy solution was one that would result in less work for me. Anger and frustration were stirred and my initial response was to act firmly with no consideration of the others involved.

A paradigm shift occurred when I took time for deep listening. Hearing the still small voice of the value of extending compassion. It was a process to fully see the shift, in stillness, the new paradigm molded my thoughts.

Martha Retreat Centre is not my place, it is our place. Each person who comes here has the choice to take responsibility for the Centre in the way that they can. The actions of each individual paves the way for our future. Will deep listening form your actions differently? The possibilities that shift through intentional change

can be dynamic (always adjusting) and can change your life and ultimately impact the world around you.

Practice a paradigm shift. Take some time today to look to the east. Reflect on what touches your senses. Pause, turn yourself 90 degrees. Now what do you hear, see, smell, taste, touch? You shifted, your perspective changed. Do this with your thoughts. Stop, Reflect, listen deeply, allow your still small voice to mold a new thought within you.

The Centre continues to be a place where new thoughts are generated, engagement is welcomed, change is inevitable.

By coming here, you are a part of our future. Our future starts with a SIMple pause, deep listening and taking the next step.

What Others Are Saying About Us

“Amazing, so peaceful and beautiful here. Food was excellent.”

“Very peaceful experience. The Centre has its own feeling of love.”

“MRC is wonderful. It felt so welcoming and homey.”

“Thank you so much for the work that is being done to further the legacy.”

“The space here is very special - my first time here, but I can feel the space of the sisters and their practices here resonating.”

What do people find meaningful about a program/retreat?

“Time for self, how God works in the stillness without me ever recognizing it.”

“The opportunity for safe, supportive, sacred space to reflect, grow, heal, opening of the heart.”

“Just feeling safe, being able to be vulnerable, loved.”

“Truly felt the space was offered just to me, yet felt the care of all present.”

“Trusting in our heart, time to reflect, amazing content.”

“The silence and permission to be mindful without expectation to connect through talking.”

Did You Know?

Taize prayer humbly introduces a very inclusive Christian worship in order to pray with all denominations. In a multiethnic world, Taize prayer becomes a spiritual force to bind people together for peace. Taize prays for reconciliation between religious denominations, peoples, and nations. Singing is one of the most essential elements of Taize prayer. Since each song is simple, it enables us to continue praying and focusing on Jesus, even after we leave the worship space and resume our daily lives.

Every 3rd and 4th Thursday at 10:00 a.m. Taize Prayer is held in the Martha Retreat Centre. All are welcome!

Labyrinth is a meditative walk metaphorically connected to our everyday life. Our journey each day is full of opportunity, possibility and challenge. There are twists and turns, yet only one winding path to and from the center. There are no dead ends or wrong turns. The path is a two-way street. It is a time to listen and hear from the messages that arise as you are in touch with nature during a mindful journey.

There are 3 stages to the walk:

- Releasing on the way in, “letting go” of what is weighing on you today
 - Receiving in the center, “pausing to reflect”, what is here for me to receive
 - Returning when you follow the path out, “pondering and integrating your experience” to your everyday life.
- Stop by to walk the labyrinth or call 403-328-3422 to check on availability.*

Celebrating 50 Years and Creating 50 Years

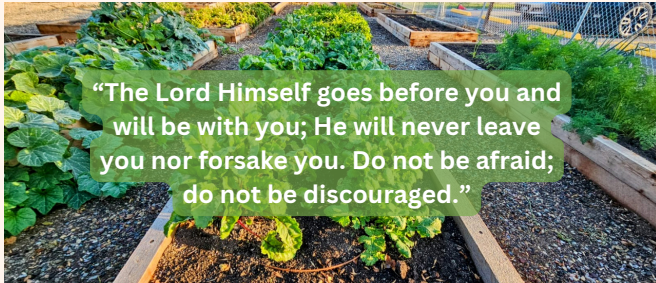
By Diana Sim, Martha Retreat Centre Executive Director



As I reflect on the future of the Centre, I see a flourishing place that continues to grow and welcomes people to come.

The development of the Contemplative Food Garden

is a testament to new growth and excitement. Visitors coming to the grounds comment on how wonderful the space looks, so inviting and new. That's only a part of what I envision for the future. The constant:



I reflect on the service of the Sisters of St. Martha in our community. As we celebrate the first retreat given 50 years ago, back in 1974. Can you imagine the number of people who have come to this beautiful space on the edge of the coulees?

Can you think about the prayers, the conversations, the personal growth, the seeds that have been planted in the lives of many people? What have those planted seeds produced? How has the Centre impacted your life? What seeds have been planted in you? What seeds are growing....and even producing?

God guided me here and He has shown me that as Deuteronomy 31:8 says: "The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

God is a magnificent God. To serve is to love. To love is to accept. To accept is to grow. To grow is to understand.

I am very much in the "to serve" stage as I do not fully know where the Centre will be 50 years from now. I do know, I am called to be faithful now. My steps are guided through discernment, an area that I have been stretched in over these last couple of years.

You are a part of the journey. Join the work as we trailblaze into the future. Commit to taking action towards the flourishing Centre, touching people's hearts, generating meaningful conversations, and inspiring change. Call Diana today to schedule a time to dream a little or dream big. There is a place here for you.

I WOULD LIKE TO BE A PART OF THE CELEBRATION 50 YEARS – CREATING 50 YEARS BY CONTRIBUTING FINANCIALLY

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR
AMBASSADOR

SPECIAL PROJECT FUND

- BUILDING UPGRADES
- NEW FURNITURE (DINING HALL, CHAPEL)
- ENVIRONMENTAL (EAVESTROUGHS, DOWN SPOUTS, RAIN BARRELS)
- CONTEMPLATIVE FOOD GARDEN

SPONSORSHIP

- PAL (PEACE AT LUNCH)
- MUSIC ON THE GROUNDS
- REFURBISH A ROOM

ENDOWMENT FUND (INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE)

We are
profoundly
grateful for
your unwavering
support that
continues to
make a world of
difference.

DONATION FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

\$ _____ ONE TIME _____ MONTHLY _____ ANNUAL _____

CASH _____ CHEQUE _____ CREDIT CARD _____

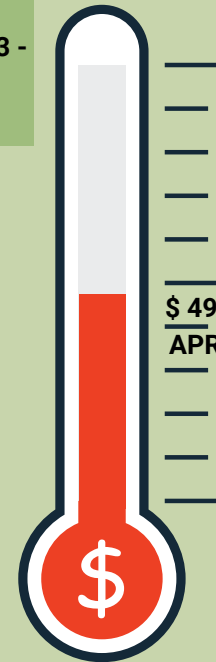
Together

WE CAN REACH SUSTAINABILITY

OUR GOAL:
SEPTEMBER, 2023 -
AUGUST, 2024
\$ 104,000.00

\$ 49,000.00
APRIL 2024

A heartfelt thank
you to all our
generous donors!
Your support is truly
invaluable and
strengthens our
mission
immeasurably



MARTHA RETREAT CENTRE - EXCITING NEWS

- **Join us May 30, at 2:00 pm** for a Moment of Celebration at the **Contemplative Food Garden Blessing Ceremony and Grand Opening**. It promises to be a beautiful event filled with blessings, music, and heartfelt appreciation for all our donors. Let's gather together to celebrate the growth of our community and the abundance of possibilities that lie ahead.



- **Music on the Grounds** will be held on **Saturday, May 25th at 5:30 p.m.** We're delighted to present Henk van Ginneken and Cathy Hawley. Cost: \$20. Supper available to purchase for extra cost. Register for the event on our website: martharetreatcentre.ca.



- **P.A.L (Peace At Lunch)** - another summer of peaceful lunches awaits as more and more people discover the joy of this serene experience. Starting May 28th and lasting until July 24th, it's a time to be nourished by peace and tranquility in nature.



- We are currently in the planning for the 2024-2025 program year and are exploring potential **facilitators or program ideas** for an upcoming event at the Martha Retreat Centre. If you are a facilitator yourself or if you have any recommendations or ideas for programs that align with the Mission and Values of the Martha Retreat Centre, we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out to Diana directly at 403-328-3422 to discuss further details or to share your suggestions. We look forward to potentially collaborating with you to create a meaningful and transformative experience for our participants.

VOLUNTEER UPDATES

- **Fund Development 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.
- With the Contemplative Food Garden complete, the **Gardening Team** needs volunteers to help in planning, planting, maintaining, and harvesting, vegetables, and herbs to sustainably produce fresh, nutritious food for meals at the Martha Retreat Centre. Contact Diana to learn more. director@martharetreatcentre.ca.
- 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. You can join Prayer Hour the first and second Thursdays of the month for May and June, at 10:00 am or write your prayer intentions anytime on our website and we'll pray for you.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

- **Mother's Day Celebration** - hospitality, sous chef
Thursday, May 9th, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, 1:00- 3:00 pm;
Friday, May 10th, 1:00 - 4:30 pm.
- **Music on the Grounds** - hospitality, sous chef
Saturday, May 25th, 4:00 - 7:30 pm.
- **Grand Opening - Contemplative Food Garden** -
hospitality, sous chef
Wednesday, May 29th, 9:00 - 4:00 pm;
Thursday, May 30th, 1:00 - 4:00 pm.

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Action for Happiness is a movement of people who together take action to create a happier and kinder world.

Diana and Irena became an Action for Happiness volunteers and will lead a monthly 10 Keys group which take place in Martha Retreat Centre beginning in June.

10 Keys Groups provide the opportunity to gather, either virtually or face-to-face and meet with like-minded people to learn about the 10 Keys to Happier Living - evidence-based ways to create a happier and more meaningful life - and how to put them into action.

10 Keys Groups are a great way to meet like-minded people locally, learn more about how to live a happy and meaningful life and find actions you can take to support yourself and others.


If you are new or follower of Action for Happiness movement and would like to join the group in Lethbridge, fill in the form on the Action For Happiness page to sign up and find out more: <https://actionforhappiness.org/groups/lethbridge>.


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