



PRAIRIE TO PINE

REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada



Write a Christmas card to the MB government: search the landfill

11 December 2023

Your words, visits, and donations are needed

For over a year, families and loved ones of the four known women murdered by a Winnipeg man have been calling for landfill searches for their bodies. Morgan Harris, 39, Mercedes Myran, 26, Rebecca Contois, 24, and a still-unidentified woman who was later given the name [Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe](#), or Buffalo Woman, have not been forgotten.

On September 5, [church leaders came to Winnipeg to listen and offer support to the families and communities](#), and were joined by hundreds of people from many communities. Since then, a number of people in United Church, ecumenical, and interfaith communities have visited the camps and/or donated. As we begin a Prairie winter, the loved ones running the camps have still not had a definitive commitment to search, and your continued support is requested. **Please read on for a brief update and then action requests.**

Where are we now?

It may be easy to assume the search will take place given that Premier Wab Kinew has expressed support for it. But little was said by the now-governing NDP [during the election campaign](#), and while there have been general assurances, no definitive commitments have been made.

Long Plain First Nation Chief Kyra Wilson and Manitoba Grand Chief Cathy Merrick have outlined their concerns with continued delays [in this summary](#). However, in a positive sign [at the one-year anniversary of most of the charges being announced](#), Long Plain First Nation is now working on a more detailed plan for a search, with federal support and a deadline of 12 January 2024.

Families, loved ones, and communities continue to live with deeply painful uncertainty and the denial of basic rights, in a context where the numbers of murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people continue to grow. Pre-trial for the accused murderer is complete, and this too is profoundly difficult for all loved ones and their communities, as they brace for a Spring 2024 trial.

What you can offer

A lot.

Your words: Please send your MLA a Christmas card with a short and simple request to search the landfill, so that those representing us are reminded of the need to respect the families' calls for searches. If you wish, you could mention a [TRC Call to Action](#) or the [recommendations of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) that is especially important to you or your community of faith. You can mail or email a card this as an individual, committee, or group: all of these are important. Short and personal messages are best.

You can find all emails and all mailing addresses online: [sorted by MLA name here](#), and [sorted by the name of your riding here](#). United Church people in NW Ontario, and indeed the entire church: please write to Premier Wab Kinew. Your words are important too! Premier's Office: 204 Legislative Building, 450 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8. Phone: 204-945-3714. Email: premier@manitoba.ca

Visit [Camp Morgan](#) and [Camp Marcedes](#): Camp leaders have confirmed that visitors are welcome. Firekeepers are present at the sacred fire every day, around the clock. Ask them or other camp leaders if now is a good time to visit, and if visiting the fire to offer prayer is permitted at that time. Please do not take any photos without permission, and do not take photos of the sacred fire. Please bring material support or cash donations if you can: food, firewood, fuel.

Donate. Cash and supplies cover all the materials needed to keep volunteer-run camps and ceremonial spaces open and safe through a Prairie winter. Donations will not be eligible for a tax receipt, so it's best to keep money donations individual, rather than running them through your congregation's books. Nor do CRA rules allow us to donate to either camp through a congregation's charitable number. Supplies can also be donated directly. Trinity United Church in Winnipeg has kindly been offering a drop off for donations to Camp Morgan, which is close to their building. Call them at (204) 269-1632.

[Information about both camps is here.](#)

[Fundraising and an Amazon wishlist for Camp Morgan are here.](#)

Camp Marcedes donations can be sent to jordenmyran@icloud.com

With gratitude for any action you can take,

Erica Wittevrongel, chairperson, Prairie to Pine Regional Council, the United Church of Canada

Rev Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, Prairie to Pine Regional Council