



3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario
M8X 2Y4 Canada

T: 416-231-5931 | 1-800-268-3781
F: 416-231-3103
united-church.ca | egliseunie.ca

15 December 2022

Chief Danny Smyth
Winnipeg Police Services
P.O. Box 1680
Winnipeg MB
R3C 2Z7
WPS-CommunityRelations@winnipeg.ca

Dear Chief Smyth:

I write on behalf of The United Church of Canada to express our deep concern that you have not listened to Indigenous families and communities affected by the murders of Morgan Harris, Mercedes Myran, Rebecca Contois, and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe.

Specifically, we ask that you reverse your decision to not search the Prairie Green landfill site.

You have said that a search is not a feasible undertaking. As people of faith, we believe that measures of feasibility have no place in honouring those who have been harmed as these women have been, and as many more continue to be in the national crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

It is profoundly important to Indigenous families and communities that Morgan, Mercedes, Rebecca, and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe be honoured and returned home in a respectful way. Refusing to even search for them sends a strong message that they are not honoured and not valued.

The United Church believes that God intends for all people to enjoy a life free from exploitation and abuse. We believe that everyone, created in the image of God, has a right to be treated with respect and protected from harm. This extends from life through death.

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Our responsibility as a society is to respect these women, and to support those who grieve, and who fight for change. Searching the landfill would be a step towards this, and would be consistent with the intent of the 231 Calls to Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

We pray that you will revisit your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Blair". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

The Rev. Michael Blair
General Secretary

cc: Mayor Scott Gillingham
City of Winnipeg Mayor's Office
510 Main Street
Winnipeg MB
R3B 1B9
mayor@winnipeg.ca

Premier Heather Stefanson
204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg MB
R3C 0V8
premier@leg.gov.mb.ca