



The stories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls used in this worship are drawn from the newspaper from Laurier University published September 11th, 2016

*In Remembrance
Of Our
Missing and Murdered Indigenous
Women and Girls*



Our Sisters in Spirit

Debbie's Story

Debbie was just Debbie. She was stubborn and wouldn't walk in the line that they tell you to walk in. At the same time, Debbie loved helping with community events such as potluck dinners, bingos, dances at the community hall, and bonfires at the beach. Noting that the police report describes Debbie as a "Native Indian" and "known alcoholic and drug addict", the family believes that police officers made judgments about Debbie based on preconceived notions and stereotypes and that these assumptions hindered the investigation into her death. Her daughter, Laura, believes they just passed her off as another dead Indian. But Debbie was a woman, a mother, a sister who was loved.

Daleen's Story

Daleen's family wanted answers; they wanted to know what happened to the beautiful, compassionate and outgoing woman who wanted to be a teacher, who loved to make people laugh, who had a passion for drama and fine arts. They wanted to know what happened to their beloved daughter, sister, mother, wife, and friend. Daleen's family says the initial police response was like being "shrugged off and brushed to the side". But they also want people to know that the Saskatoon Police Service and RCMP eventually launched an intensive investigation into Daleen's disappearance. "If it wasn't for their hard work, my daughter would never have been found," says Daleen's mother.

Danita's Story

Danita had her first child, a daughter named Cassidy, at 18. Once born, Cassidy became Danita's passion. Although she was still battling addictions to medications prescribed to her, Danita was determined to go back to school and find a place where she could build a home for herself and Cassidy. Danita would tell her little girl, "It won't always be like this." In an attempt to keep her promise, Danita went to treatment centres, trying to get better. After two weeks went by with no sign of her daughter, Dianne, fed up with police inaction, marched down to the station and demanded that something be done to locate Danita. Dianne had to convince police officers that Danita really was missing, that she wasn't "out partying" as they insisted. The police responded, "Give us some time or give us a place to look." Dianne replied, "I think I'm doing your job."

Terrie's Story

As a youth, Terrie excelled in school. She was active in drama and choir and won first place in a school science fair. She was an artist and a writer and could speak French. Her teachers used to say, "I wish all my students were like her." Almost eight years have passed and Terrie's murder remains unsolved. Her parents try to stay positive but the process is frustrating. They are sure that someone knows what happened to their daughter and are pleading for anyone with information to come forward. The silence needs to be broken.

Georgina's Story

Georgina carried the trauma of being removed from her home as an infant, or growing up in foster care, group homes and the streets, of missing her family and community. She carried the pain of addiction, prostitution, and violence. But it was losing her children to the child welfare system that hurt Georgina the most. When she lost her children, she lost a piece of herself. A proud Cree woman, Georgina was the mother of seven children, as well as a cherished sister and friend. Her favourite colour was red and she loved to make bannock. She was a ball of fire with a heart of gold. She made people feel safe. These are the things people remember most about Georgina.

Claudette's Story

When Claudette laughed, she laughed from the belly. She had a big smile and contagious laughter. She could get anyone laughing. She had a good sense of humour and lit up a room when she came in. She was also a very strong girl and she stood up for herself. When Claudette's disappearance was reported, sometimes they didn't even say her name in the headlines. Instead, her family read words like "sex trade," "drug addicted" and "Indigenous." That was tough for the family to deal with. It made it difficult to get society to see Claudette for who she really is. She's a mother. She's a daughter. She's a sister.

Delores' Story

Family and friends recall that Delores was always smiling, had a great sense of humour and was the life of the party. As a youth, Delores attended Lebret Indian Residential School. It was not a place where Delores found the nurturing and guidance she needed to fulfill her dreams of becoming a nurse or working with children. Delores' daughter, Laura, was placed in foster care during the "60s Scoop," when it was not uncommon for "Indian" children to be removed in order to be placed with white families. In 1987, Laura returned to Standing Buffalo Dakota First Nation after discovering this was her home community. After speaking to relatives and community members, Laura began to realize that her mother had not been seen or heard from in a very long time.

Shelley's Story

Shelley was the daughter of Aileen and Jim Joseph. She was the mother of Ivan, Sheena, Amanda, and Shane. Shelley was a Mohawk woman, Wolf Clan from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. She was a woman with beautiful long brown hair and many gifts. This is her story. A year and a half after she was murdered, Shelley's oldest son completed suicide. Ivan was an iron worker and very handsome. He had a long ponytail and loved his red Oakley sunglasses. Family members say he never recovered from the loss of his mother.

About our Bella

From a young age, Bella was a creative, bright and determined girl who aspired to meld her traditional beadwork skills with contemporary fashion. Bella always had a positive outlook on the world. She was able to find the humour in almost all situations, making jokes, and lightening the mood for everyone around her. She listened to all kinds of music, loved to dance, and she was the ever-present DJ, playing whatever fit the mood. Bella was sweet, supportive, loving and encouraging. But she was not one to mince words and was honest, straightforward and assertive when she needed to be. Even though she was an extrovert and liked to explore the world around her, Bella was also a homebody and you could find her at home tidying up, doing school work, cooking or taking some down time listening to music. And like most 25 year olds, Bella loved social media and was often taking artistic photos and posting them on her on Instagram and Facebook. Bella loved to try foods from all around the world, an influence from the many high school or university friends she had from different parts of the globe. She could make a mean soup and bannock, and the best cookies. Bella encouraged her family and friends to enjoy the simple things in life, a good meal, a funny joke and precious time with friends and family.

Lisa's Story

Lisa Marie Young is remembered as a beautiful and vibrant woman. Her parents always felt like she was going in the right

direction. "My daughter wanted to shine," says Lisa's mother. "No matter what she wanted to do, she would have been awesome." More than anything, the family wants to keep Lisa in people's minds. They do not want people to forget about Lisa Marie. Lisa always felt strong about her independence. She felt safe in her community, as though she knew everyone. She never thought anyone would harm her. Still, Lisa was practical and if she went out at night she was always with a friend. But the night she went missing, Lisa was with friends.

Amber's Story

Amber's mother strongly believes the greatest gift from the Creator is the gift of a child. As an infant, Amber was breastfed and this mother-daughter bond continued as she grew into a chubby baby. Amber was also "daddy's girl" and when she was three years old her father designed and beaded her first fancy dance outfit in her favourite colours, purple and pink, and her parents travelled with her on the powwow trail. Amber's purpose here on Earth was to bring this issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women to the forefront because society did not see this as a priority. Our communities need to take responsibility for the safety of our women and girls.

We have heard just a few of the many stories of our missing sisters you are invited to take a stone with the name of a missing or murdered Indigenous woman or girl who you can pray for. Thank you for your participation.