



## PRESS RELEASE

July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015

For Immediate Release

Contacts:

Kristy Bell  
Volunteer, Walking with Our Sisters Comox Valley  
[kristygibson-bell@shaw.ca](mailto:kristygibson-bell@shaw.ca)

Rev. Ryan Slifka  
Minister, St. George's United Church  
778-585-2084  
[stgeorgesminister@shaw.ca](mailto:stgeorgesminister@shaw.ca)

On Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup> beginning at 10:00am, a special bell-ringing ceremony will be held on the front grounds of St. George's United Church. The church bell will ring to commemorate the indigenous women and girls in Canada that have been reported missing or have been murdered in the last 30 years. The bell will ring 1181 times—once for each woman. The event will be accompanied by a small ceremony.

The ringing is set to coincide with the beginning of *Walking with Our Sisters*, a memorial art exhibition to honour the lives of these women, and to acknowledge ongoing grief suffered by their families and the Indigenous community. It is hoped that this event will raise awareness about the memorial and the missing and murdered women, as well as the plight of indigenous peoples in Canada.

"It is absolutely necessary to raise awareness about the event and the missing and murdered women," said Rev. Ryan Slifka, Minister at St. George's, who will be one of the hosts at the event. "But is also an opportunity for us to host an event that also sheds light on the issues that indigenous people continue to face in our country." The United Church of Canada, to which St. George's belongs, was one of the Christian denominations charged with running Residential Schools on behalf of the Canadian government as part of its strategy of cultural assimilation. "The scars run deep," he said, noting that the missing and murdered women and residential schools are part of a larger web of interconnected issues. "In many ways, we confused spreading our culture and its values with the Christian faith

and what it means to follow Jesus Christ. This is an opportunity for us to repent from our past complicity while working towards a common future of reconciliation."

Kristy Bell, one of *Walking with our Sisters* organizers and event hosts states that "in unity with St. Georges we are not only raising awareness of the systemic traumas First Nations peoples have endured, but also we will set the foundation for healing within our own community by honouring our missing and murdered Indigenous Women."

The Walking with our Sisters memorial will be at the K'omoks Band Hall from July 31-Aug. 15, 2015 in what is thus far its only British Columbia appearance.

[www.walkingwithoursisters.ca](http://www.walkingwithoursisters.ca)  
[www.stgeorgesunited.com](http://www.stgeorgesunited.com)

End