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Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Laurier's Faculty of Music raise awareness of "stolen sisters"

WATERLOO – The Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Laurier's Centre for Music in the Community, along with their partners, are performing a music and word festival, titled "Sing Fires of Justice for Stolen Sisters," on Sunday, Oct. 6 to raise awareness about the number of Aboriginal women who go missing or are murdered in Canada, and to support local drum group Mino Ode Kwewak N'gamowak (Ojibway for "Good Hearted Women Singers").

The evening will feature performances by Laurier Aboriginal students, the Good Hearted Women Singers, and a combined choir of community singers, the Laurier Singers, WLU Chapel Choir and the UW Conrad Grebel University Choir. Laurier Associate Professor Lee Willingham and Instructor Gerard Yun will conduct the choirs. Between the musical offerings, award-winning author Lee Maracle will tell stories that explore the injustice of Canada's missing Aboriginal women.

Maracle was born in North Vancouver and is a member of the Sto: Loh nation. She is currently an instructor in the Aboriginal Studies Program at the University of Toronto, teaching the Oral Tradition of Ojibway, Salish and Longhouse people, and a distinguished visiting professor of Canadian Culture at Western Washington University. She has also spent much of her time doing healing and cultural reclamation work in Aboriginal communities in Canada. Maracle recently received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work promoting writing among Aboriginal Youth.

"It's going to be a wonderful event filled with story and song that will build relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people," said Debbie Lou Ludolph, director of the Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song. "At the same time, it is true that Aboriginal women in Canada face a shockingly high rate of violence and our hope is that this event will increase public awareness and honour the Aboriginal sisters, daughters, mothers and grandmothers that have gone missing."

The event begins at 7 p.m. at St. Matthews Lutheran Church, 54 Benton St., Kitchener. It is free and open to the public. Free-will donations will be accepted to support the Good Hearted Women Singers.

The event is sponsored by the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, the Laurier Centre for Music in the Community, Laurier's Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, the Royal Canadian College of Organists and St. Matthews Lutheran Church.

About Sing Fires of Justice

Sing Fires of Justice grew from a choral workshop and celebration of Reformation Sunday at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary to an annual ecumenical musical event that raises awareness of community issues and has involved church, university and community choirs, the Royal Canadian College of Organists, members of the Kitchener-Waterloo and KW Youth symphonies, and guest speakers.