



**“Justice, only justice, you shall pursue”**  
**Federal Election Resource 2025**



**Diocese of Toronto**  
Anglican Church of Canada

## FEDERAL ELECTION RESOURCE 2025

The upcoming federal election gives us the opportunity as Christians to consider how our values and faith commitments might shape our national public life. We are called to love our neighbours as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being, and to safeguard the integrity of God's creation. Scripture calls us to pursue justice (Deut. 16:20), to defend the rights of the vulnerable (Prov. 31:8-9), and to look not only to our own interests, but to the interests of others (Phil. 2:4). How can we best express these commitments through our participation in the democratic process?

This election comes at a time when our nation is facing serious threats to its economy and even to its sovereignty. Canadians across the country have responded with a resurgence of national pride. Yet amidst the patriotic rhetoric, it is worth considering what kind of Canada we are defending. Are we championing our country merely because it is ours? Or do we have a vision of a nation which ensures that nobody is left behind, one which values diversity, one committed to peace and justice at home and abroad, one which protects and stewards the richness of its natural heritage? We are perhaps more aware than at any time in history of the ways in which Canada has fallen short of this vision, particularly in its treatment of Indigenous peoples. Yet for many, these values remain a touchstone of what it means to be Canadian. What is more, many of those who have championed those values as part of Canadian identity did so out of their own deep faith commitments.

As Christians, our ultimate citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3:20); yet we are still called to seek the welfare of the society in which God has placed us (Jer. 29:7). The motto of the Order of Canada, *Desiderantes meliorem patriam* ("They desire a better country,") is taken from Hebrews 11:16. It is clear that the author of Hebrews is referring to the heavenly kingdom, not Canada or any other earthly nation. Yet in seeking to live according to God's kingdom, in putting love of neighbour and care of the Earth into practice, we also contribute to the welfare of our communities, and that of our nation as a whole.

As we approach the federal election on **Monday, April 28**, may we take the time to do the following, and encourage our friends, family, neighbours and fellow-parishioners to do likewise:

- **Pray** for the unity and well-being of Canada, for all federal candidates, for a fair, peaceful, and just election process, and for wisdom and discernment among voters.
- **Think through our concerns and priorities** in this upcoming election, in the context of our Christian faith and values.
- **Learn about the issues**, especially as they affect the most vulnerable.
- **Ask questions of candidates** at the door, at all-candidates' meetings, town halls, and other events.
- **Vote!** For all information on where and when to cast your ballot, voter identification requirements, and official candidates in your riding, please visit Elections Canada <https://www.elections.ca/>

It is our hope that this resource will help you in the discernment process as you prepare to vote.

- Elin Goulden, Social Justice & Advocacy Consultant, Diocese of Toronto

## **POVERTY**

Canada is a wealthy country, yet too many Canadians are unable to afford an adequate standard of living. For the first half of the last decade, poverty rates in Canada were in decline. However, since 2021, poverty rates have been rising, eroding much of the progress that has been made. The rising cost of living, particularly food and housing, has led to increased financial stress on Canadians, especially those in the lowest income brackets. Food insecurity now affects nearly 1 in 4 Canadians, with food banks and other charitable services struggling to keep up with demand.<sup>i</sup> Without national programs, a similar proportion of Canadians struggle to afford dental care and prescription medicines, leading to worsening health outcomes.<sup>ii iii</sup>

Poverty rates are highest among Indigenous and racialized people, people with disabilities, single-parent families, and workers in precarious jobs. Income inequality is also on the rise, with the wealthiest 20% accounting for more than two-thirds of Canada's net worth in the second quarter of 2024, while the least wealthy 40% accounted for less than 3%.<sup>iv</sup>

While tariffs and trade wars are disruptive to the overall economy, they have a disproportionate effect on those who are already living on low incomes. People living in poverty are less able to absorb the cost of increased prices. Workers in precarious jobs are less likely to be able to access Employment Insurance (EI) and must depend on inadequate provincial and territorial social assistance. Even where EI is available, the benefits are not necessarily adequate: nearly half of households where EI was the main source of income experienced food insecurity in 2022.<sup>v</sup>

If we are to make Canada more resilient to economic uncertainty, we must build up the capacity of low- and moderate-income Canadians to meet their basic needs. One possible response is a Guaranteed Basic Income, which could provide stability and security to recipients while generating downstream savings in shelter, criminal justice, and healthcare. A recent report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer suggested that a guaranteed basic income could cut poverty in Canada by 40%.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Questions for Candidates:**

- What is your position on a Guaranteed Livable Income/Basic Income Guarantee?
- How will you protect more Canadian workers from loss of employment income?
- Canadians with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty as those without disabilities. How would you ensure the Canada Disability Benefit can have the greatest impact?
- What investments would you make in terms of benefits and access to childcare to lift more children and families out of poverty?
- How would you enhance Canada's universal healthcare system to make dental care, pharmacare, and mental health supports accessible to low- and moderate-income Canadians?

## **RESPONDING TO THE OPIOID OVERDOSE CRISIS**

Canada is still in the midst of an opioid overdose crisis which in 2024 claimed the lives of 21 Canadians every single day.<sup>vii</sup> One-third of those deaths occurred within the province of Ontario. Supervised consumption sites have proven to be highly effective at reversing overdoses, preventing this statistic from being much higher. By providing low-barrier, low-stigma access not only to supervised consumption and needle exchange but also to other medical services and supports, these sites help promote public health, reduce public drug use, and connect people with treatment options.

### **Question for Candidates:**

- Do you support continuing exemptions to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to allow Supervised Consumption Sites to operate in Canada?

## **JUSTICE FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**

The number of people forcibly displaced from their homes due to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations is the highest ever recorded, nearly double what it was a decade ago. Canada welcomed more than 51,000 refugees in 2023, more than half of whom were sponsored by faith and community groups through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. Our faith calls us to welcome the stranger and treat them fairly, recalling the experience of God's people as strangers in Egypt and Jesus' own experience as a refugee. Yet the world is less safe than ever for refugees, with recent developments in the U.S. severely restricting refugee resettlement and exposing many vulnerable demographics, including transgender people, to human rights violations.

Canadian agriculture and other industry sectors, including construction and caregiving, rely heavily on seasonal and temporary migrant labour. Despite paying taxes in Canada, migrant workers and others without regularized immigration status cannot access many of the benefits to which they have contributed. They face barriers to housing and healthcare, and are vulnerable to labour exploitation due to the threat of deportation if they speak out.

As the cost of living has risen in Canada, migrants have been scapegoated as the cause of the housing and affordability crises, despite bearing the brunt of these conditions which have been caused by decades of domestic policy choices.

### **Questions for Candidates:**

- Will your government provide permanent resident status for migrant and undocumented workers, to protect their labour rights and access to the benefits and services they support with their tax contributions?
- Will your government revoke the Safe Third Country Agreement with the US in recognition of the increased risk of human rights violations to asylum-seekers in the US?
- Will your government include gender identity as grounds for seeking asylum in Canada?

## HOUSING

Canada is already facing a housing and homelessness crisis, which will only be exacerbated by a trade war with the US. The National Housing Strategy has helped unlock federal investment in housing but has failed to keep pace with the need. Growing homelessness has resulted in a significant increase in encampments in communities across Canada, while housing costs continue to soar, squeezing low- and moderate-income households. Over half of Canadians fear losing their housing if their financial situation were to change.<sup>viii</sup> Economic shock caused by a trade war could thus result in many more Canadians falling into homelessness.

Housing policy in Canada has tended to focus on increasing market housing supply and addressing the needs of middle-income homebuyers, despite the fact that the number of renter households in Canada is growing at twice the rate of homeowner households.<sup>ix</sup> And, while increasing housing supply is essential, it is not sufficient by itself to meet Canada's housing need. Market-price housing is unaffordable to low and increasingly moderate-income households, who are already disproportionately impacted by rising costs of housing and other basic necessities. Low-income renters represent over 80% of Canadians in core housing need, yet government spending on this demographic has declined over the past decade.<sup>x</sup>

Non-market and co-op housing could meet the needs of low- and moderate- income Canadians, but Canada's share of non-market housing is less than half the average share in OECD countries, and far behind that of nations like the UK and the Netherlands.<sup>xi</sup> A recent study by Deloitte found that investments in community housing could provide a significant boost to productivity and economic growth.<sup>xii</sup> This in turn could help bolster the Canadian economy in the face of economic uncertainty.

Addressing the housing needs of Canadians thus requires a major investment in the creation and preservation of non-market housing, as well as targeted benefits to help those experiencing homelessness access housing, and to prevent low- and moderate-income Canadians from falling into homelessness. Tax reforms could incentivize the creation and preservation of affordable housing, and regulatory reforms help streamline the construction process and lower costs, while developing a skilled workforce and building up new supply chains not reliant on the US could help protect housing construction from the impacts of a trade war.

### Questions for Candidates:

- What specific policies do you propose to end homelessness and prevent Canadians, particularly renters, from falling into homelessness?
- How would you increase the share of non-profit and co-op housing in Canada so that more Canadians can find affordable housing that meets their needs?
- What regulatory and tax reforms would you introduce to facilitate housing construction, including multi-unit residential rental buildings?
- Given the impact of a trade war with the US on the cost of critical building supplies, how would you develop alternative supply chains, increase the number of skilled construction workers, and scale up modular housing to meet Canada's housing needs?
- How would you protect against the large-scale purchase of rental housing by foreign investors, especially if the Canadian dollar is weakened due to trade war?

## ENVIRONMENT

2024 saw the hottest global temperatures on record, the first year with average temperature exceeding 1.5 ° C above pre-industrial levels<sup>xiii</sup>. Canada is warming at twice the global average, with the Arctic region warming nearly four times as fast.<sup>xiv</sup> Canadians are already experiencing the impacts of climate change in the increased frequency and severity of heat waves, wildfires, flooding, and drought, costing us billions in damage to infrastructure alone, not to mention the lives and health of humans, wildlife and domestic animals, and impacts on agriculture, forests, and water quality. Indigenous peoples, Canadians with disabilities, and those living in poverty are disproportionately affected by climate impacts. We cannot afford not to act.

The threat of US tariffs has led to renewed calls for oil and gas pipelines and other fossil fuel development. Yet others see the current moment as an opportunity to invest in local, renewable sources of energy and building an electrical grid to share clean power between provinces and territories.<sup>xv</sup> Building resilience to climate change and to tariff threats could go hand in hand.<sup>xvi</sup>

A recent Leger poll found that 67 percent of Canadians think that the next Canadian government should make climate action and protecting nature a high priority. 65 percent agree that Canada should invest in renewable energy rather than fossil fuel developments. 62 percent believe Canada should maintain its climate commitments, regardless of the actions of the US administration.<sup>xvii</sup> Fourteen Canadian conservation organizations have also written to federal party leaders urging them to ensure tariff relief does not lead to the destruction of Canada's primary and old-growth forests.<sup>xviii</sup>

### Questions for Candidates:

- Do you support Canada's greenhouse gas emissions targets under the Paris Accord? What policies will you implement to ensure Canada meets or exceeds those targets?
- What actions will you take to increase Canada's resilience to climate change as well as its resilience to tariff threats?
- How will your government support a just transition to a fair, inclusive, green economy that benefits workers and communities?
- How will your government ensure that the rights of Indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent is upheld in the development of energy and resource projects?
- What actions will your government take to protect Canada's forests, wetlands, waters, and biodiversity?

## **MISSING AND DISAPPEARED INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND UNMARKED BURIALS AT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS**

*Prepared by the Rev. Leigh Kern, Diocesan Right Relations Coordinator*

Thousands of Indigenous children died under the care of the federal government and churches in Indian Residential Schools and institutions across the country. The cause of death and the names of deceased Indigenous children were often not recorded by administration, and they were not returned to their beloved families and home communities to honour them with dignity. Residential School cemeteries and burial sites were not protected by the federal government or churches, and many have undergone desecration. Indigenous Nations and families have often had to fundraise themselves to find their missing loved ones and recover unmarked burial sites associated with Residential Schools. The federal government is discontinuing funding for the National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. This funding is crucial to continue the sacred work of honouring deceased Indigenous children. The Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Burials released 42 Sacred Obligations in October 2024 that call for continued and sustained holistic reparations, that deceased children who were not honoured in their life and death in the institutions they perished in, may finally be honoured by their families and communities. “The National Advisory Committee was established to meet a vital need—to ensure Indigenous communities have access to independent, trusted and expert information in their efforts to identify, locate, and commemorate their missing and disappeared children,” shared committee member Kisha Supernant. “We are extremely disheartened and disappointed by the decision not to renew funding for this work, which is so important to reconciliation and to healing for our people.”<sup>xix</sup>

### **Questions for Candidates:**

- Will your government implement the 42 Sacred Obligations of the final report on Missing Children and Unmarked Burials?
- Will your government reinstate funding for the Indigenous-led program to identify, locate and commemorate missing children?
- Will your government commit to implementing the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

### **CONCLUDING PRAYERS**

Creator God,  
from you every family in heaven and earth takes its name.  
You have rooted us and grounded us in your covenant love,  
and empowered us by your Spirit to speak the truth in love,  
and to walk in your way towards justice and wholeness.  
Mercifully grant that your people, journeying together in partnership,  
may be strengthened and guided to help one another to grow into the full stature of Christ,  
who is our light and our life. Amen.<sup>xx</sup>

Lord, keep this nation under your care. Bless the leaders of our land, that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth. Help us elect trustworthy leaders, contribute to wise decisions for the general welfare, and thus serve you faithfully in our generation to the honour of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. <sup>xxi</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> <https://proof.utoronto.ca/2024/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2023/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://globalnews.ca/news/11015948/canada-dental-care-2023-2024-avoiding-visit-cost/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/what-we-do/media-centre/news-releases/one-in-four-canadians-not-filling-prescriptions-due-to-cost>

<sup>iv</sup> Statistics Canada. Distributions of household economic accounts for income, consumption, saving and wealth of Canadian households, second quarter 2024.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/241010/dq241010a-eng.htm>

<sup>v</sup> [https://cfccanada.ca/CFCC/media/assets/EI-Reform-Policy-Primer\\_-\\_Dec-2024.pdf](https://cfccanada.ca/CFCC/media/assets/EI-Reform-Policy-Primer_-_Dec-2024.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.pbo-dpb.ca/en/publications/RP-2425-029-S--distributional-analysis-national-guaranteed-basic-income-update--analyse-distributive-un-revenu-base-garanti-echelle-nationale-mise-jour>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-related-harms/opioids-stimulants/>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://abacusdata.ca/housing-concerns-grow-as-over-half-of-canadians-fear-losing-their-home/>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/2357-national-housing-day-look-homeowners-and-renters>

<sup>x</sup> [https://assets.nationbuilder.com/caeh/pages/355/attachments/original/1741887168/HousingCanadaReport\\_EN.pdf?1741887168](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/caeh/pages/355/attachments/original/1741887168/HousingCanadaReport_EN.pdf?1741887168)

<sup>xi</sup> <https://cdhowe.org/publication/tingting-zhang-canadas-housing-crisis-growing-challenge-vulnerable-populations>

<sup>xii</sup> [https://chra-achru.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Community-Housing-and-Productivity-Study\\_final.pdf](https://chra-achru.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Community-Housing-and-Productivity-Study_final.pdf)

<sup>xiii</sup> <https://climate.copernicus.eu/global-climate-highlights-2024>

<sup>xiv</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-022-00498-3>

<sup>xv</sup> <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/an-east-west-oil-pipeline-is-a-trap-canada-needs-an-east-west-electricity-grid/>

<sup>xvi</sup> <https://climateactionnetwork.ca/civil-society-highlights-tariff-response-and-climate-action-must-go-hand-in-hand/>

<sup>xvii</sup> <https://davidsuzuki.org/press/majority-canadians-support-climate-action-renewable-energy-ahead-federal-election/>

<sup>xviii</sup> <https://naturecanada.ca/news/press-releases/fourteen-conservation-groups-urge-federal-leaders-to-ensure-tariff-relief-does-not-harm-canadas-forests/>

<sup>xix</sup> “Statement on behalf of the National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools Missing Children and Unmarked Burials”, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, February 13th 2025. <https://nctr.ca/statement-on-behalf-of-the-national-advisory-committee-on-residential-schools-missing-children-and-unmarked-burials/>

<sup>xx</sup> <https://www.anglican.ca/faith/worship/resources/nadpproppers/>

<sup>xxi</sup> The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada, p. 678