

# Building A Society Where All Can Flourish

## Anglicans *take action* on poverty & housing issues

Please add your voice!



### DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 400,000 Ontarians turn to food banks each month to ward off hunger.
- Minimum wage leaves a full-time employee living in poverty.
- At \$626/month social assistance rates are lower than they were 20 years ago, with inflation.
- 156,000 Ontario households are on wait-lists for affordable housing.

Ontario is renewing its poverty reduction strategy this fall. "MPPs of all parties unanimously supported Ontario's Poverty Reduction Act in 2009," notes Murray MacAdam, Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant for the Diocese of Toronto. "We need to challenge the myth that our wealthy society can't afford to combat poverty.

In response, Anglicans in the dioceses of Niagara, Toronto and Huron are taking the Gospel call for justice to the seats of power by coming alongside our neighbours. Many are organizing local delegations to meet with MPPs to urge bold action to help people hard hit by poverty, hunger and homelessness. "A socially just society is one in which all citizens have enough to flourish", says the Right Reverend Michael Bird, Bishop of Niagara, "and we must all do more to live into this vision."

### What Does Bold Action Look Like?

1. **Increase social assistance** rates by \$100 as a down payment on dignity
2. **Invest \$120 million** in funding for new affordable housing in Ontario.
3. **Raise the minimum wage** to 10% above the poverty line, with an immediate increase to \$11.50/hr
4. **Index minimum wage and social assistance** rates so that they keep pace with inflation
5. **Set targets** to reduce poverty for all Ontarians

### Addressing Root Causes...

As a people of faith, we often respond to people in need through acts of charity. But that is only the first part of the justice journey, and yet increasingly it has become an end. "Food banks, originally a Band-Aid solution, have become institutionalized. We need to better address the reasons people need food banks", says the Right Reverend Terrance Dance, Bishop of Norfolk. He adds, "working with the government to ensure people have adequate resources to provide for themselves is one way of working towards a solution."



### Take action

#### Strive for the Dignity of Every Human Being!

1. **Listen** to your brothers and sisters, friends and neighbours who are struggling to make ends meet because of inadequate incomes.
2. **Learn** about the issues in your community and about the root causes of those issues.
3. **Pray** for those seeking justice, especially those with lived experience of poverty; that bold action might lead to transformative and systemic change in how our society addresses poverty and homelessness.
4. **Connect** with local community groups, social service agencies and coalitions to come alongside those seeking justice.
5. **Engage** your local MPPs and community leaders on these issues and demand bold action on poverty reduction.

***"It is important that our elected representatives hear from us. We all have a role to play in building a society in which all live with dignity. This is part of our baptismal vows and a response to the Gospel."***

—The Most Reverend Colin Johnson, Archbishop of Toronto and Metropolitan of Ontario

Learn more and act:

visit [www.niagara.anglican.ca/vision/socialjustice.cfm](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/vision/socialjustice.cfm)