**Poverty: Help End Child Poverty in Canada**

Children are not an isolated group, and poverty is not an isolated issue. Child poverty needs to be addressed through an approach that supports the whole family. The gospels tell us that Jesus valued children and their place in the community. However, still today, children are among the most vulnerable people in our society.

• Recent statistics indicate that one in seven children in Canada lives in poverty.1

• When it comes to child poverty, Canada ranks 24th of 35 industrialized countries.

• At a higher risk for poverty are children of immigrants, of a lone woman parent, of racialized families,2 of Aboriginal identity, and those with a disability.

• Regulated child care in Canada is currently characterized by high fees, low staff wages, mediocre quality, and unmet demand.

Across the country and across our church, the effects of poverty are plain to see: food banks continue to proliferate; homeless people beg on our city streets; out-of-the-cold programs are overflowing; many Indigenous people live in conditions unimaginable for a wealthy nation like ours. As Christians, we believe that all people have the right to be treated with justice, love, and respect. Children, especially, are the most vulnerable in our society and yet hold the most promise as future citizens, workers, and family members. As a resource-rich nation, Canada has an obligation to care for all people, ensuring that basic needs are met. The United Church urges the federal government to a. develop a national strategy to end child poverty, with measurable and attainable goals b. raise the maximum federal child tax benefit (including the supplement for low-income families) to $5,600 per child for low-income families (50% higher than current levels) c. increase child welfare support given to Indigenous people to balance that given to others d. initiate and invest in an affordable, accessible, quality child care system as a way to support lowincome families.

***Questions You Can Ask*** 1. How will you and your party work to establish an overall strategy to reduce child poverty, with measurable and attainable goals? 2. Is your party prepared to raise the maximum federal child tax benefit (including the supplement for low-income families) to $5,600 per child for low-income families (50 percent higher than current levels)? 3. Will you and your party increase child welfare support given to Indigenous people to balance that given to others? 4. What are your party’s plans to initiate and invest in an affordable, accessible, quality child care system as a way to support low-income families?

1 Campaign 2000, Family Service Toronto, *Canada’s Real Economic Action Plan begins with Poverty Eradication,* 2013 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada. 2 “Racialized people is a term used to indicate that race is socially constructed rather than an inherent physical identity that one is born with. It also draws attention to the fact that in racist systems, people seen as White are often regarded as ‘neutral’ or having no ‘markings’ of race. The term refers to people who are viewed as different from the status quo or unequal.”(*Ending Racial Harassment*, The United Church of Canada,

**Federal Election Kit 2015** The United Church of Canada 24 L’Église Unie du Canada