# Sample Candidate Questions

(These samples are based on the United Churches for Dartmouth Provincial Election Questions, August 2021.)

Our Creed calls us to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others and to seek justice and resist evil. This has guided the development of questions that you may wish to ask candidates seeking to be your MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly).

These examples show how questions about local issues can be asked within a faith perspective. The final version was prepared by Shirley Hazen of Grace United Church, part of the United Churches for Dartmouth. Some of the questions were part of a joint Provincial All Candidates Forum hosted by Grace United Church and Christ Church Anglican in the fall of 2021.

## To Live with Respect in Creation

### Background

* The Sustainable Development Goals Act has a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% below 2005 levels by 2030, and achieve net-zero emissions in Nova Scotia by 2050. In 2019, NS was 30.2% below 2005 levels and 17.3% below 1990 levels.
* The current target of protected land is 14%.
* The Lahey Report estimated that about 80% of forest harvesting was done by clear cutting (nearly 90% of harvesting on private land and up to 65% of Crown land harvesting).
* There are 72 entries on the Nova Scotia Species at Risk list: 24 are endangered; 2 are of special concern; 13 are threatened;15 are vulnerable; 5 are extinct, and 3 are extirpated (no longer exist in this region).

### Questions

1. The Paris Accord, which was signed by Canada, seeks to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C over preindustrial levels. What are the top two actions your party plans to do achieve this?
2. Climate change not only impacts the province’s infrastructure and ecosystems, it also impacts the residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), especially vulnerable communities. What does your party propose to do to mitigate its impacts?
3. Our use of the land impacts ecosystems. What does your party plan to do about:
	1. land protection/coastal land protection;
	2. land use;
	3. forestry practices/the Lahey Report?

## To Love and Serve Others

### Background

* In 2019, Poverty Rates in Nova Scotia were:
* 12.1% of the population (Canada – 10.1%)
* 11.7% of all children under age 18 (Canada – 9.7%)
* 37.3% of single people ages 16-64 (Canada – 32.9%)
* 7.8% of older Nova Scotian over 65and up (Canada – 5.4%)
* The standard household rate for basic needs assistance for one person is $686 for housing and $608 for board. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the average bachelor apartment in the HRM is $865 monthly.
* To be above the poverty line in metro HRM, Stats Canada estimated that a family of four needed a monthly income of $3,845 in 2019. The current standard household assistance rate for a family of four is $2,442, a gap of $1,400 monthly.
* Minimum wage in Nova Scotia $12.95/hr. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a living wage in Halifax for 2020 is $21.80.

### Questions

1. Our churches work with people in poverty. We see the terrible costs in health, dignity, and opportunities for individuals and families. How does your party plan to address poverty?
2. The United Church of Canada (and the Senate Special Committee on Poverty in 2008) supports establishing a guaranteed livable or basic income. What are your party’s views on this?
3. Affordable housing is both a supply and a demand problem. What does your party plan to do about this?
4. In Dartmouth, people built temporary structures on public lands to give the homeless somewhere to live. What does your party plan to do about this issue?
5. There are shortages of medical professionals (doctors, nurses, and other specialties) around the world. How does your party plan to deal with shortages in Nova Scotia?
6. COVID-19 exposed issues in our long-term care system from inadequate buildings for infection control to not enough long-term care workers. Add to this the number of people in hospital beds who should be in long term care facilities, and it is clear this sector has a problem. What are your short- and medium-term solutions to this issue?

## To Seek Justice and Resist Evil

### Background

* Many racial hate crimes are not reported. From 2019 to 2020, police reported that hate crimes in HRM doubled (from 8 to 16).
* Nova Scotia has the highest unexplained gender wage gap in Canada (2018).
* 33.3% of Canadian women experience sexual assault (9.1% of men).
* 35% of Canadian women experience physical assault (37.9% of men).
* 25.7% of Canadian women experience intimate partner violence (17% of men).

### Questions

1. We are concerned about racism and white supremist ideology. How will you and your party take action against intolerance, racism, and expressions of hate?
2. Although the federal government is principally responsible for the Crown and Indigenous peoples relationships, the Nova Scotia government also has a role. What will you/your party do for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples?
3. Women are more likely to earn less and to be victims of intimate partner violence. They face attitudes about gender and sexuality that trivialize the harassment and sexual violence they face. The pandemic has also disproportionately affected women. What does your party intend to do to improve the situation of women in our society?

## Tips for Creating Your Own Questions

* Reflect on what you and your community want to be discussed in the election.
* How do these questions relate to your faith? Consider using the [New Creed](https://united-church.ca/community-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/faith-statements/new-creed-1968) to provide a framework
* Be sure to provide accurate, concise background information that gives a foundation for your questions. Show the sources for your information if possible.
* Statistics Canada provides numerous statistics on both a provincial and national basis. Some useful sites are:
	+ [Dimensions of Poverty Hub](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/topics-start/poverty)
	+ [Gender, Diversity and Inclusion statistics](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/topics-start/gender_diversity_and_inclusion)
	+ [Census of Population](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm)
	+ [Infographics](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/index-eng.htm)
* Compose your questions to be clear and focused on a concrete answer. Placing it in the context of what the United Church believes or is doing locally is strategic and shows that you are already engaged and invested in the issue.