



# The Presbyterian Church in Canada

## The Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod

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To the Presbyterian Churches in Alberta,

I am writing as a citizen of Calgary, born and raised in Alberta, granddaughter of immigrants, the minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary, and current moderator of the presbytery of Calgary-Macleod of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I am writing to urge Christians living in Alberta to be aware of the discord that the non-constitutional questions on the referendum are creating and the distraction it creates to the more important constitutional questions.

The first five questions in the proposed October referendum <sup>1</sup> target immigrants and breed animosity within our province. It is a distraction. The information is incorrect. **Scapegoating a vulnerable sector of our population is wrong.**

It is simply not true that the workers who are building our houses (many of whom are immigrants) are the cause of the housing shortage. It is not true that more international residents are using social services than Canadian citizens moving into Alberta. In fact, the opposite is true - "Canada's investment in refugees pays off." <sup>2</sup> In addition, certain sectors rely on immigrant workers as a vital source of labour. <sup>3</sup>

*"...blaming migrants does not build hospitals or schools."*

*"In fact, migrant workers pay taxes that support social services despite already disproportionately lacking access to those services. Some migrant families living in Alberta are already being denied access to education and healthcare. Further limiting access will not improve the social support available to others."* <sup>4</sup>

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[1] [These are the questions on Alberta's October 2026 referendum](#)

[2] [Refugees in Canada - United Nations Refugee Agency | UNHCR Canada](#)

[3] [The Construction Labor Force in Canada - GRM Construction & Innovation](#)

[4] [Instagram](#)

Alberta residents, unless First Nations or Métis, are ALL immigrants. Treaty nations remind us of the good reciprocal relationship intended with newcomers to share land and resources peaceably. We have much to learn as Treaty people. **We need to care for the foreigner because we were once foreigners.** It is challenging enough to adapt to a new country without more laws making it even harder. The result is fewer immigrants in Alberta, and an aging population with fewer people to support education, health, and social services.

Immigrants contribute more to social services than they take. What will be the cost of those lost contributions?

St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Calgary has hosted a Nuer-speaking congregation from South Sudan for over 25 years. I am aware of the genocide that is currently targeting the Nuer people by the government of South Sudan. Asylum seekers (refugees) do not come to Alberta for physiotherapy. They are not the reason for long wait times in the hospital or delays in knee surgeries. They are fleeing for their lives. They have family here who are keen to support them. Our province depends on newcomers to sustain key sectors, strengthen our communities, and support our aging population. Immigrants and refugees (including those from South Sudan) contribute to Alberta's economic and social wellbeing and turning them away would harm both the people seeking safety and the province that benefits from their presence.

*“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.*

*Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” – Proverbs 31:8-9*

It's time to speak up! I urge Presbyterians and all Christians living in Alberta to think carefully about why these questions are being proposed. Will they affect positive change? Will they create a better health, education and social system? Who stands to gain or lose? Whose power is being eroded and at what cost? What is our responsibility to the vulnerable? Scapegoating a vulnerable sector of our population is wrong. The non-constitutional questions in the October referendum are a distraction and should not be asked. I urge you to write your MLA about this concern and use your voice as your conscience guides you.

In Christ's Service,

*Laurie McKay*

Rev. Laurie McKay  
Moderator of Presbytery Calgary-Macleod