'The way of Jesus is the Way of Love. And the Way of Love can change the world.' – Bishop Michael Curry

With every decision, we can choose whether we follow the Way of Love. In this interconnected world, many of our decisions and actions affect our sisters and brothers around the globe. Following the Way of Love has the power to change the world into one in which every human being, made in God’s image, can flourish here on Earth.

The Scottish Parliament Elections on 6 May is an opportunity for us follow the Way of Love. We can use this time to call on future decision makers to create policies that help lift people out of poverty, and for solutions to a broken world where our economic system continues to fuel poverty, inequality and the climate crisis.

As recent events have shown, the world has never been so inter-connected. Our actions, and those of our elected representatives and governments, cause ripple effects on the lives of our global neighbours.

The COVID-19 crisis has caused misery for millions of people and has exacerbated many existing inequalities. But it has also demonstrated that far-reaching change is both essential and possible. Rebuilding from the pandemic, with a focus on justice, offers the opportunity to reset, renew and reimagine a just, sustainable world.

Summary of our manifesto

Christian Aid Scotland has set out a vision of a world in which everyone can flourish in our 2021 manifesto - read our call to action in full at: www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/our-work/scottish-parliamentary-elections-2021

Christian Aid's manifesto seeks solutions that address the underlying drivers of climate change, global inequality and poverty, and which put us on track to a more just and sustainable world. One in which our global climate emergency is recognised by world leaders and where the rapid and radical changes required are made; one in which the world’s wealth is more evenly spread and responsibly managed; one in which every person’s voice can be heard; and one in which decision makers prioritise peace over war.
Key Themes and Questions for Candidates

1. Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD)

Occasionally the terms ‘development’ or ‘international development’ are used interchangeably with the term ‘aid’. But Christian Aid has long understood that the role of governments in tackling poverty goes far beyond providing funds for programmes on the ground, however vital that may be.

Addressing issues such as climate change, gender inequality, conflict, migration, and trade policy is crucial in tackling the root causes of poverty. We therefore support a government-wide approach that considers the impact of decisions across all departments on the world’s most vulnerable.

Questions:

• Do you support the creation of a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill during the next Parliament that makes all public bodies set objectives towards sustainable development outcomes, ensuring that they impact positively on people and the environment here in Scotland and in low-income countries?

2. Climate Justice

Climate change and international development are closely linked: the world’s poorest people tend to be the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and have fewest resources with which to adapt – despite having done least to cause the problem. Women worldwide are bearing the heaviest burden in dealing with the effects of the climate crisis while too often lacking the power to decide how to tackle it.

This is a simple issue of justice.

Christian Aid is clear that Scotland must deliver at least its fair share, according to the science, to meet the 1.5 degree commitment established by the Paris Agreement.

With some of the strongest climate targets anywhere, Scotland can play an important positive role: both by implementing policies that meet or exceed these targets; and in doing so, by providing a much-needed positive international role model that others might follow - especially with the pivotal UN Climate Summit, COP26, to be held in Glasgow in November 2021.

Questions:

• Scotland has set a target of cutting emissions by 75% by 2030. Do you support this target and how will you make transforming the economy to meet the challenges of the climate crisis an urgent priority in the next parliament?

• How will you and your party ensure that when world leaders come to Glasgow for the COP26 climate change summit this year they see a nation which is committed to helping people in the world’s poorest countries, and those people most impacted by climate change, adapt and thrive?

• Recognising Scotland’s historic responsibility as a rich industrial nation, will you and your party agree to significantly increase the Climate Justice Fund to show international solidarity with people already dealing with the worst consequences of climate change?
3. Development Education

Education has substantial scope to help shape Scotland's long-term approach and attitudes towards international development. To effectively deliver the Curriculum for Excellence's clear focus on Global Citizenship Education, Scotland's education sector needs access to high-quality resources and information on issues of international development.

Questions:

• Do you support the continued direct financial support for the five Development Education Centres in Scotland?

4. Sustainable Economy

To truly ‘build back better’ a sustainable development approach to the economy will be required. Economic thinking, planning and activity should be designed for long-term sustainable development, not short-term financial gains for some, at the expense of people and the planet.

Questions:

• Do you support a measurement of progress beyond GDP growth that represents the broader concerns of human and ecological wellbeing?

• Would you and your party commit to using public procurement, public policy and leadership on business practice in Scotland to support sustainable development?

5. International Development Fund

Scotland's International Development Fund plays an important role as part of a broad, coherent response to tackling international poverty. Since 2005, successive Scottish Governments have complemented the UK's DFID/FCDO programmes with support for projects in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The relatively small scale of this programme has allowed for innovation and a genuine partnership approach, particularly with Malawi.

Questions:

• In the context of widespread pressure on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), are you supportive of an increase in Scotland's International Development Fund?

How to engage with candidates

Don't worry about being an expert on the issues. The most important thing for them to know is that you care about the issue. They want your vote.

Remember too that most of them are standing for election because they actually want to bring about positive change, so you caring about this issue gives them a mandate to act upon it.

Their time will probably be limited so have a think about what you want to say before you meet them. It might help to write your question down so you say exactly what you want.

Take note of what your candidates commit to so you can follow up with them if they get elected.

Write to your candidate

You can write or email your candidates with your chosen question(s).

Find details of your candidates at: whocanivotefor.co.uk
**Hustings**

Hustings usually occur in specific ‘seats’ or constituencies when an organisation, such as a church, invites local candidates to a public meeting. An audience of voters listens to the debate and puts questions to the candidates.

If you can get involved in local hustings, this will demonstrate to the candidates that many of their constituents really do care about global poverty.

Find out if an online hustings is happening in your area by looking at:

- Local churches’ websites and social media feeds
- Your local candidates’ websites – find details of your candidates at whocanivotefor.co.uk
- The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office website: scpo.scot/elections/

**Social Media**

This election campaign will look and feel very different than previous elections and candidates will be using social media to communicate with voters more than ever before.

Getting involved in the conversation on social media is a good way to grab your local candidates’ attention and help shape the debate.

**DO YOUR RESEARCH**

Find your local candidates’ social media profiles and make sure you follow or ‘like’ them. This will give you an idea of the platforms they use most often and the best way of getting their attention.

If you can’t find their profiles by typing in their name in the search bar, keep an eye out for contact details on any election leaflets posted through your door.

**SHARE CONTENT**

Share election campaign material posted on Christian Aid Scotland’s Facebook and Twitter channels. You can make sure your local candidates see it too by tagging in their handle (by typing @ + their name) in the post and it will pop up on their feed.

**START A CONVERSATION**

Your local candidates, especially if they are existing MSPs with a large social media following, are more likely to see your message if you reply to something they have already said.

Keep an eye on their social media channels and if they post something about one of the topics you care about, reply with a question and let them know it’s really important to you as a voter.

**Thank you!**

Thank you for helping ensure that a just, sustainable world is a priority for all candidates!