

The Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger

‘Give us each day our daily bread’

Luke 11:3



The Best Supper, © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com

This service of prayer and supporting materials for the Churches Week of Action on Food have in collaboration with the following Ecumenical partners:



This week of action incorporates World Food Day, 16 October.

*In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle this week, we pray for the people and churches of:
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama*

Why We Pray and Act Against Hunger

The Focus of our Gathering

Across the globe more than 41m people—around half of them children—are at risk of falling into famine in 43 countries. Famine is preventable and has no place in the 21st century. These people are not starving, they are being starved by conflict and violence; by inequality; the impacts of climate change; and by a fight against COVID-19 that has left them even further behind.

Time is running out. Action must be taken now to prevent the needless deaths of tens of thousands of children. If the world stands by and does too little too late, children will starve to death. Hunger will also force children and their families to make dangerous survival choices, such as child marriage or child labour, and this will have lasting harmful consequences for girls and boys.

Up to 811 million people were hungry in 2020, up by 161 million from 2019. This is a 25% increase from 2019, which is greater than the total increase over the past 5 years. Hunger increased in all regions in the world. Asia has the largest total number of hungry people, but Africa has the highest proportion of its population.

Everyone is exhausted by the battle to defeat COVID-19, but in the poorest parts of the world, families are now literally looking for their next meal. People know the value in coming together to defeat the pandemic and now we must stand together with the most vulnerable to help them survive, whether they are located among the poorest countries in the world or the most wealthy.

In our time of worship, we will focus on the petition for daily provision – ‘Give us each day our daily bread.’ We have the assurance that in God’s economy there is abundance, which ensures that our daily needs can be met. Our response therefore is to extend that abundance to all people in all places and at all times.

Order of Worship Service

Notes for Worship Service

For virtual gatherings, a PowerPoint slide has been placed in the spiritual life resource kit for usage.

While gathering, if the worship is being done in person, various fruits (grapes, apples, pears, etc.) and/or pieces of different types of bread shall be distributed to those assembled. In keeping with COVID-19 protocols, these should be prepared in advance as individual servings. Alternatively, persons can also bring their own. If the worship is being done virtually, persons are invited to have their own pieces of bread and/or fruits as listed above.

During the time of gathering in preparation for worship, persons are invited to partake of the fruit/bread. This can be done during the musical prelude whether in person or virtual.

The order of worship allows for a sermon. Alternatively, there are reflection questions that can be used to guide discussions on the Gospel reading.

This order of service is meant to be adopted to fit your confessional context.

While partaking of the food, an individual(s) can read the words below inviting persons to further reflect on the theme of God's abundance from which we all receive our daily provisions.

'Taste and see, that the Lord is good!' One of the expressions of God's abundant love for us is with food—tasty, nourishing, satisfying. As you take a bite, enjoy the taste, texture and flavour of what you are eating. At the same time, offer a word of thanks for God's goodness.

'I am the bread of Life,' Jesus declares. As you chew and swallow this piece of bread, invite Christ to nourish your spirit during this time of worship.

God has so abundantly provided for all we could ever need. Yet, so many are left struggling—either due to lack of available, sustainable food, or due to over-availability and misuse. During this worship time, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how we might be better stewards of our own food resources.

We are connected to one another by faith, and our growth is dependent on each other and God. Reflect on your connection with those who are in worship today / in your family or circle of support / in your community. Today, we affirm our need to be connected with one another and with God. It is that connection that unites us as we pray and act against hunger.

Opening Greeting

(These can be read by various voices located throughout the worship space.)

Hear these words of Jesus:

'I come that you may have life, and have it abundantly...'*(John 10:10)*

'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.'*(John 6:35)*

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'*(Matthew 5:6)*

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

Hospitable God, You invite us to a great banquet, where no one will hunger, no soul will thirst; where the last will be first, and the humble and mighty will trade places. As we gather for worship this day, nourish our spirits with the abundance of your abiding love. Inspire us to share your abundance with others, knowing that with you there need not be any fear with us because of a sense of scarcity. Let us welcome those who are strangers with a spirit of hospitality that is radically loving, as you are to us. We pray in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! Amen.

Opening Hymn/Song/Music:

Prayer of Confession:

Creator God, we come acknowledging that we have sinned in the ways in which we have misused and abused the life-giving resources that you have placed on the earth.

We confess our failure to recognize the ongoing hunger crisis that exists in our world and our unwillingness to respond to ensure that the hungry are fed and the sick are healed. *(Isaiah 58:10)*

We confess that we have missed the mark in dismantling systems that promote inequity and injustice that have resulted in widespread hunger and starvation.*(Matthew 25:35)*

We confess our ingratitude and selfish pride in failing to appreciate that all creation belongs to you, our Lord, and that the very life we have, the surroundings we live in and the food that we receive and have access to is a divine gift from you. (*Psalm 24:1*).

We confess before you that we have failed in answering your call to share this gift unconditionally so as to make a difference in the lives of people in need. (*James 2:15-19*).

Grant us forgiveness, as we confess our sins to you and may your pardoning grace lead us to repentance. As a forgiven and repentant people, may we continually be transformed in the way we behave, the way we consume, the way we treat nature, and the way we treat each other. Empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit, may we be caretakers of the environment as we strive to provide food and sustenance for all and by so doing reflect the shared values of the faith that we profess to follow.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Amen.

Psalter Reading – Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
Give us each day, our daily bread.
From God's abundance, all are fed.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me.
Give us each day, our daily bread.
From God's abundance, all are fed.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Give us each day, our daily bread.
From God's abundance, all are fed.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

Give us each day, our daily bread.
From God's abundance, all are fed.

Prayer for Illumination

God of Abundance, your Word fills our souls with overflowing grace. As we listen to your Word, inspire us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that we may be faithful witnesses to the joy of your kingdom, on earth as in heaven. Amen.

Scripture Reading - Luke 11: 1 – 8

He was praying in a certain place, and after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' ²He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

⁵And He said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him."⁷ And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything."⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.'

Hymn/Song/Music:

Sermon/Reflection Questions/Symbolic Actions

As we reflect on the reading above from the Gospel of Luke, here are some questions to consider/discuss:

1. How aware and informed are we of some of the urgent needs of people who are faced with a hunger crisis?
2. Hunger can be shameful and belittling causing persons to hide their need from others. How might we express compassion without being offensive?

3. In what ways, if any, have we been dismissive of the cries of need for help when they reach our ears?
4. As the hungry persist in their call and cry for help, in what ways can we too be persistent in our praying and acting against hunger?
5. Do we know of best practises and role models for a way of life that lead towards a world without hunger?

Hymn/Song/Music

Response to the Word¹

God in the Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ,
calls us by grace
to be renewed in the image of our Creator,
that we may be one
in divine love for the world.

Today is the day
God cares for the integrity of creation,
wills the healing and wholeness of all life,
weeps at the plunder of earth's goodness.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God embraces all hues of humanity,
delights in diversity and difference,
favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God cries with the masses of starving people,
despises growing disparity between rich and poor,
demands justice for workers in the marketplace.
And so shall we.

¹ "A Companion Litany to Our Social Creed" of the United Methodist Church. The "World Methodist Social Affirmation" (aka "Our Social Creed") was adopted by the World Methodist Council in Nairobi, Kenya in 1986. From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church - 2016*. Copyright 2016 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.

Today is the day
God deplores violence in our homes and streets,
rebukes the world's warring madness,
humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace,
celebrates where justice and mercy embrace,
exults when the wolf grazes with the lamb.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God brings good news to the poor,
proclaims release to the captives,
gives sight to the blind, and
sets the oppressed free.
And so shall we. Amen.

Hymn/Song/Music

Prayers of Intercession²

God, at whose bidding the earth came into being
Who promised and provides seedtime and harvest
Who is faithful and loving to all he has made
Give us each day our daily bread.

Christ, whose food was to do the will of the one who sent you
Inspire our hearts with desire to serve your purposes
That through us the poor and oppressed may be released
Give us each day our daily bread.

Bread of life, Word made flesh
Make your truth known in places where injustice prevails
Speak through us to challenge greed and inequality
Give us each day our daily bread.

² Faith in Foodbanks: Resources for Churches, Joint Public Issues Team: on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and Church Action on Poverty. www.jointpublicissues.org.uk

God and Father of all humanity
May we welcome those whom others might call stranger
So that in plenty or need, no-one need be excluded
Give us each day our daily bread.

The Lord's Prayer (*Invite to pray in one's own language*)

Closing Hymn/Song/Music:

Sending Forth/Benediction

You give us each day our daily bread, O God.

As you have filled us with good things,

may we never close our hearts to those who are hungry, homeless and poor.

Let us go forth in your love to abundantly welcome and nourish in spirit and body those who seek to know you.

And, "now, to God, who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine," be all honour and glory, today and always. Amen.

Hymns/Songs/Music Suggestions

ADDITIONAL MUSICAL SELECTIONS:

“For Everyone Born (A Place at the Table)”

Shirley Erena Murray © 1998 Hope Publishing Company

“Until All Are Fed”

Lyrics: Bryan McFarland & Tommy Brown. Music: Bryan McFarland. © General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, Atlanta, USA.

“Se och smaka” (*Taste and see*) by Tomas Boström, Sweden

Hosanna – Ecumenical Songs for Justice and Peace © 2016 WCC Publications, p. 69

“I’m Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table”

African American traditional, public domain

“Ven a la mesa”

Latin America, anonymous author

“La mesa de la paz”

Collective creation at a Red Create workshop in Cuba in 2008, sponsored by WCC

“Come Along, the Feast is Ready”

Music: Slovene folks song “Kaj boš, Janko, jutri delal”. Words and folk song adaptation © Áine Pederson Lee. See the 2019 World Day of Prayer resources

“Bendice, Señor, nuestro pan”

Music and text: anonymous from Argentina.

“Come to the Water”

Text: Isaiah 55:1,2; Matthew 11:28-30; John Foley, SJ. Tune: John Foley, SJ © 1978 John B. Foley, SJ, and OCP, Portland, USA

“All Things Are Ready”

Charles Hutchinson Gabriel, 1895; public domain

“Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread”

James Montgomery, 1825 altered. Suggested tune: ST. AGNES

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

African American traditional, public domain

“Christ For the World We Sing”

Music: Felice de Giardini, 1769. Words: Samuel Wolcott, 1869.

The United Methodist Hymnal # 568

“Come, Sinners to the Gospel Feast”

Music: Katholisches Gesangbuch, ca. 1774; adapt. From *Metrical Psalter*, 1855. Words: Charles Wesley, 1747 (Lk. 14:16-24). The United Methodist Hymnal # 616

“Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love”

Music: Ghana folk song, arranged by Tom Colvin. Words: Tom Colvin © 1969 and 1989

Hope Publishing Company

Prayer/ Poem

Table Blessing*

To your table you bid us come

You have set the places, you have poured the wine,
and there is always room, you say, for one more.

And so we come.

From the streets and from the alleys we come.

From the deserts and from the hills we come.

From the ravages of poverty and from the palaces of privilege we come.

Running, limping, carried, we come.

We are bloodied with our wars,

we are wearied with our wounds, we carry our dead within us,
and we reckon with their ghosts.

We hold the seeds of healing,

we dream of a new creation,

we know the things that make for peace,
and we struggle to give them wings.

And yet, to your table we come.
Hungering for your bread, we come;
thirsting for your wine, we come;
singing your song in every language,
speaking your name in every tongue,
in conflict and in communion,
in discord and in desire, we come,
O God of Wisdom, we come.

by Jan Richardson

Videos and Other Spiritual Life Resources

Below, you will find a selection of videos that can be incorporated in the prayer. In addition, there are links to other websites with helpful spiritual resources that address how we can pray and act against hunger:

Resources

- Find resources for your church and family at wvi.org/prayagainsthunger.

Videos

- The WesleyMen, a fellowship related with the World Methodist Council – <https://fastpraygive.org/>
- Pastor Prays Over His Community Living in Famine-Like Conditions in South Sudan, a video from World Vision – <https://youtu.be/Amfe3Q5K2as>
- Lord's Prayer: Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread, a video from World Vision – <https://youtu.be/YPZC9-UeRi0>
- Impact of Hunger on Children, Families, and Communities, a video from World Vision – <https://youtu.be/iFHt12QF0HQ>