

The Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger

'Feed my sheep'

John 21



"Feed my sheep" - Ronald Abdou

The illustration is inspired by the passage in John 21:1-18 in the context of the global hunger crisis. The image is intended to express both provision and deprivation. In the passage Jesus prepares a meal of fish for his disciples. The illustration shows the remnant of the meal eaten communally after which Jesus invites his disciple to feed his sheep. But there is also deprivation for so many that impacts on all of us and it is in this context we all need to hear the invitation from Christ to participate in the act of ensuring none go hungry.

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: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico

Cover Image - Artist Statement

As an invitation for people to think about the global hunger crisis and base inspirational thoughts on the passage John 21:1-18, the image is created with the intent to express a duality of provision and deprivation. The fish as a main subject draws directly from the act of fishing the disciples engaged with and fish being the source of food in that context of the Biblical text. The left-over state of the fish however calls on the duality of having been consumed but also a lack thereof. In this light, it expresses both provision and deprivation. The numerous hand prints are a stand-in for a multitude, a crowd, reflecting on the issue as global. The colour scheme (red-yellow-green) is inspired by food ingredients. Coalescing with the fish, the coloured hand prints add a left-over aesthetic to the image, reminiscent of a platter of fish, chips and tomato sauce. The overall intent is for the image to harness more than just one story, being invitational while commenting on the global hunger crisis.

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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 of the world. Asia has the largest total number of hungry people, but Africa has the highest proportion of its population.

In our time of worship, we will focus on the invitation from Jesus to follow him – ‘Feed my sheep.’ We have the assurance that God sees and knows and hears the cry of each person experiencing hunger in the world today and invites us to participate in their redemption, ensuring that the daily needs of all people can be met. Our response, in hope-filled obedience, is to join in God’s redemptive work in the world.

Order of Worship Service

Notes for Worship Service

We are exhorted many times in the Scriptures to give thanks to God (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Psalm 107:1; Philippians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Psalm 106:1.). Thanksgiving is also the gateway to worship (Romans 1: 21). As we gather for this service, whether online or in person, let's be reflecting on what we are grateful to God for. You may like to write those things down, or draw pictures, as part of your worship expression to God. We can be thankful to God for who He is, as well as what He has done for us!

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.

As you name those things you are thankful to God for you might like to reflect on and respond to the below verses about God's love.

*"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19
Thank God for His love for you.*

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3: 16
Thank God that His love for you means that He gave what is most precious to give you life.*

*"... hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." Romans 5: 5
Ask for God's love in your heart, so that you might love as He loves.*

*"He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6: 8
As for God's help to fulfil His calling on your life - to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.*

Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind ... And a second is like it: "You shall love

your neighbour as yourself.” As we are one Body, bound together by this command that Jesus gave us, let us aspire to grow in our love - for God, for ourselves and for our neighbours. May our motivation to do good, be from the overwhelming love of God.

Lord, today, we affirm our need to have your love in our hearts, as we seek to pray and act against hunger.

Opening Greeting

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

These are the words of Jesus to His Father on our behalf, our Lord's prayer for us:

"I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17: 20-26)

Opening Prayer

Let us join our prayer with Jesus' prayer:

Righteous Father,

Thank you for your gift of unity to us, and that you love us, even as you loved your Son when He was on this earth. Help us to live out of that oneness, and the knowledge that we are loved sons and daughters of the living God. May the world come to know more of your light in the darkness and your love in despair, through us your people. Let us be 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

Psalter Reading – Psalm 136:1-5; 23-26

1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

for his steadfast love endures forever.

2 O give thanks to the God of gods,

for his steadfast love endures forever.

3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords,

for his steadfast love endures forever;

4 who alone does great wonders,

for his steadfast love endures forever;

5 who by understanding made the heavens,

for his steadfast love endures forever;

23 It is he who remembered us in our low estate,

for his steadfast love endures forever;

24 and rescued us from our foes,

for his steadfast love endures forever;

25 who gives food to all flesh,

for his steadfast love endures forever.

26 O give thanks to the God of heaven,

for his steadfast love endures forever.

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. (*Psalms 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.*

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God, you have created us for love, and it is Christ's love that shows us the way. Nourish us with your Spirit as we receive your Word, that we may learn to love more fully. *Amen.*

Scripture Reading - John 21:1-19

1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No."

6 He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them, and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. [18 Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." 19 (He said this to

indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”]

Hymn/Song/Music: (Local selection)

Sermon

Reflection Questions/Symbolic Actions

As we reflect on the reading above from the Gospel of John, 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—whether they live in our own communities or on the other side of the world?
2. In what ways, if any, have we been dismissive of the cries of need for help when they reach our ears?
3. 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?
4. Do we know of best practises and role models for a way of life that lead towards a world without hunger?
5. Hunger can be shameful and belittling causing persons to hide their need from others. How might we express compassion without being offensive?

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.

¹ “A Companion Litany to Our Social Creed” of the United Methodist Church

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.

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 Intercession:

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.

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*)

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.

Amen.

Closing Hymn/Song/Music:

Sending Forth/Benediction

“I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3: 16-19

Let us say together:

Amen, Amen, Amen Hallelujah

Lord may it be so!

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 bos 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>
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