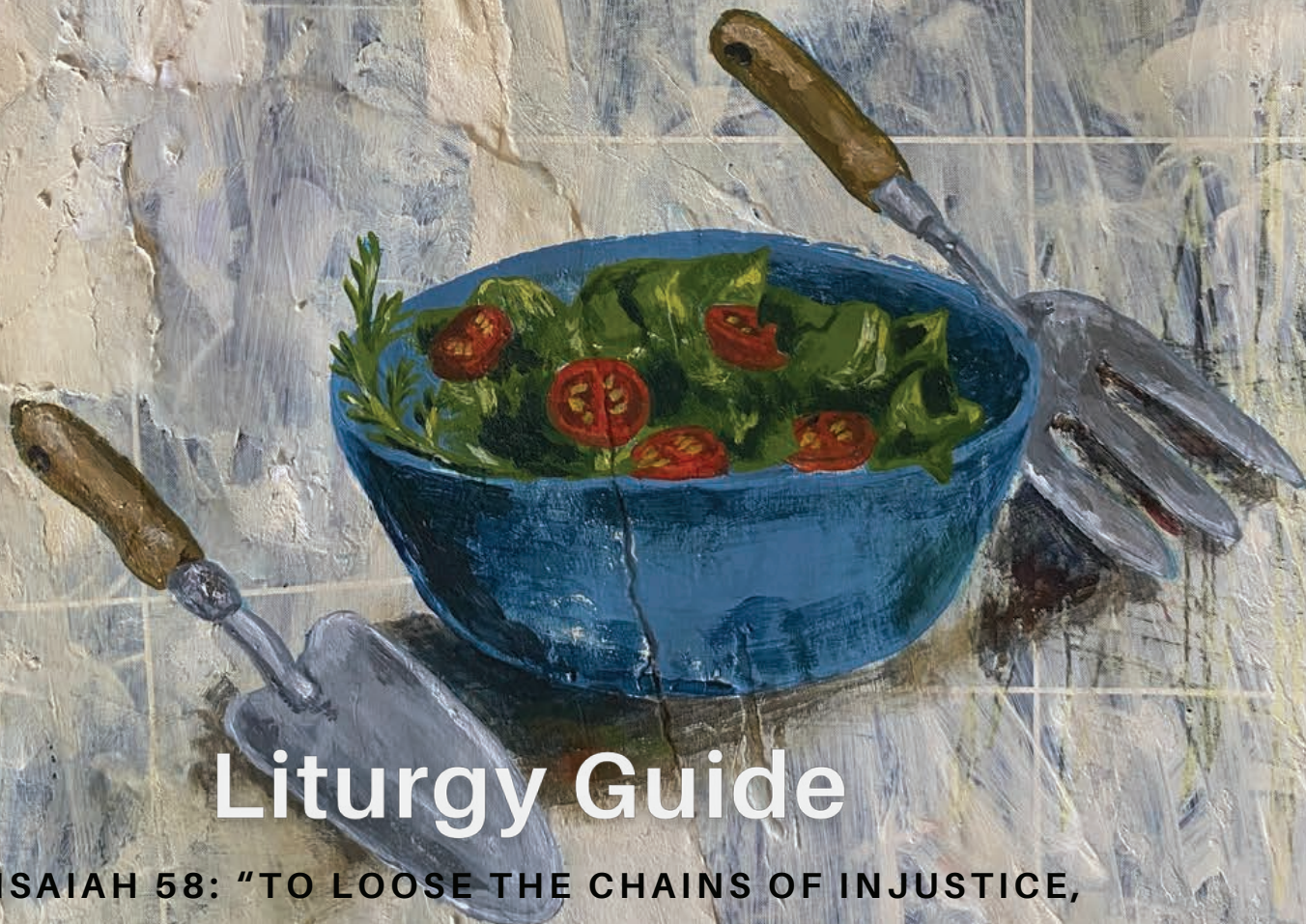


WEEKEND OF PRAYER AND ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

11-13 OCTOBER 2024



Liturgy Guide

**ISAIAH 58: "TO LOOSE THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE,
UNTIE THE CORDS OF THE YOKE, TO SET THE
OPPRESSED FREE...AND SHARE OUR FOOD WITH THE
HUNGRY."**

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Liturgy Guide and Resources

**for the Weekend of Prayer
and Action Against Hunger
October 11-13, 2024**

For this Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger, Christians from all around the world will gather for prayer and worship around the theme of global hunger and food justice.

We offer this guide to support worship planners to develop a service of prayer or worship that fits your local context. You will find selections of prayers to choose from, which are offered to be used or adapted for your own community's context.

Planning a Worship Service

The term “liturgy” refers to the structure of a worship service. Simply put, it is the way in which we, God’s people, offer our prayer and praise to God in community. Depending on one’s denomination or context, the liturgy may take on many forms. In some Christian traditions the liturgy is more formal and structured, while in others it may be more casual or spontaneous. As you plan your own service of prayer or worship, consider these common elements of a liturgy:

- 1. Greeting / Opening Prayer / Prayer of the Day:** Gathering the people together for worship with words of welcome, a blessing, and/or a prayer that sets the tone for the service
- 2. Music:** Hymns, songs, or psalms are used throughout the service to reflect the theme or scriptures of the day
- 3. Prayer of Confession:** We acknowledge our sinfulness and shortcomings, asking for forgiveness, and returning our hearts back towards God’s love
- 4. Scripture Reading/s:** One or more scripture texts are selected that focus our hearts and minds on God’s Word
- 5. Sermon / Homily / Reflection:** A worship leader (clergy or laity) offers a message that further explains and applies God’s Word to the life of the congregation, with an invitation or challenge to respond
- 6. Prayers of Intercession:** Prayers are offered for the needs of others and for our world
- 7. Offering / Offering Prayer:** We prayerfully offer ourselves and our resources to share God’s love with others and for the support of God’s church
- 8. Communion / Eucharist (optional):** The congregation may share the bread and cup of communion around the Lord’s Table (depending on denomination and context)
- 9. Prayer of Commitment:** We recommit ourselves to being faithful followers of Jesus Christ, through prayer and action
- 10. Benediction / Sending Forth:** The gathered community is sent out with a blessing



Opening Greeting

(based on Isaiah 58:6-8, 10-11)

Leader: Isn't this the fast I choose, says the Lord: releasing wicked restraints, setting free the mistreated, and breaking every yoke of injustice?

All: It is sharing our bread with the hungry, and bringing the homeless poor into our house, covering the naked when we see them, and not hiding from our own family

Leader: Then your light will break out like the dawn, and you will be healed quickly!

All: Our righteousness will walk before us, and the Lord's glory will be our rear guard!

Leader: Open your heart to the hungry and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted,

All: Then our light will shine in the darkness and our gloom will be like the noon

Leader: The Lord will guide you continually and provide for you, even in parched places

All: We will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water that won't run dry



Opening Prayer

(based on Isaiah 58:6-8, 10-11)

Leader: Let us pray,

God of Compassion and Justice,

Through the words of the prophet Isaiah, we hear your promises of justice for those who are oppressed, abundance for those who hunger for food or righteousness, and healing for your world. As we now gather together (from places all around the globe), may our worship be reflected - not only in our words - but with our hearts and our lives, as well. Inspire us and use us as bearers of your promises of justice, healing, and abundance for others and this world.

Glory and honor be to you, O God, now and forever,

All: Amen.

Prayer of the Day / Opening Prayer

(Option 1)

A Prayer for Children and Families

Loving God,

As we gather, we come with hearts open and eager to connect with you and with one another. We bring our prayers and reflections, knowing that you hear us and are present with us wherever we are.

This weekend, we join in solidarity with others around the world, praying and acting against hunger. We recognize that there are many who do not have enough to eat, and we hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

We pray for all the children and families who go to bed hungry each night, for those who struggle to find nourishment and sustenance. May they experience your love and provision, and may their needs be met.

We also pray for the organizations and individuals working tirelessly to alleviate hunger and poverty. Grant them wisdom, resources, and strength as they seek to make a difference in the lives of those who are suffering.

Help us, dear God, to be compassionate and responsive to the needs of others. Inspire us to take action, both big and small, to combat hunger and injustice in our communities and in the world.

As we worship and reflect together today, may our hearts be filled with gratitude for the abundance we have been blessed with. May we never take for granted the food on our table and the provision in our lives.

Guide us, O Lord, in our actions and choices, that we may be instruments of your love and justice. Teach us to share generously, to be mindful of our neighbours, and to work towards a world where all are fed and cared for.

We offer this prayer in faith and hope, trusting in your goodness and mercy.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

(Option 1)

(It is suggested that various voices from the gathered community offer up the following petitions.

The scripture references need not be spoken out loud.)

Voice 1: Let us pray,

Creator God, we come before you, acknowledging that we have sinned in the ways we have misused and abused the life-giving resources 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)

Voice 2: 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)

Voice 3: 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)

Voice 4: We confess that we have failed to answer your call to share this gift unconditionally, in order that we may make a difference in the lives of people in need. (James 2:15-19)

Voice 5: Forgive us, Lord, as we confess our sins to you, and may your pardoning grace lead us to repentance.

All: God, in your mercy, hear our prayer of confession. Forgive us and lead us forward by your grace to be hope and light in the world.

Voice 6: As a forgiven and repentant people, may we continually be transformed in the way we live, 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 faithful stewards of your world, as we strive to provide food and sustenance for all.

Voice 7: By doing this, O God, may our lives reflect the faith we profess, so that all people and all your creation may flourish. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

All: Amen.

Prayer of Confession

(Option 2)

Leader: When we ignore the beauty of creation,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When trees are torn down and forests become deserts,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When bees die and mango trees no longer have fruit,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When we mine the land for its gold and oil, yet millions have no food,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When we know what we should do, yet we walk the other way,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: For we bring God's anger upon ourselves, and we walk into outer darkness.

Silence

God of all creation, hear the confession of our hearts.

Send your spirit to renew the whole creation

As we proclaim the everlasting love of your Son.

All: Amen

Spiritual Life Resources of the 10th WCC Assembly in Busan, South Korea

Prayer of Confession

(Option 3)

Lord God,

We come together today and acknowledge that you are our Creator, Sustainer and Judge.
Help us to live in your world, your way and please forgive us when we fall short of your best.

Forgive us when we have not shared what we have for fear of not having enough.
Forgive us for not relying on you for our daily bread.
Forgive us when we have not loved our neighbour.

Help us, Lord God, to commit to a right and better relationship with food.
In the bounty of your good creation, we know that there is enough for all.
Help us to live into your promises of abundance for all.
It is in the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

Prayer 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 this 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 this 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 this 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 this day our daily bread

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





Scripture

The following scripture selections relate to the theme of hunger and food justice.

It may be helpful to consider various translations as you select scripture/s for your setting.

Isaiah 58:6-12	<i>"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice ... Is it not to share your bread with the hungry..."</i>
Psalm 34:1-8	<i>"O taste and see that the Lord is good ... "</i>
Psalm 146:5-7	<i>"Happy are those whose ... hope is in the Lord their God ... who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry..."</i>
Matthew 5:1-12/	<i>(The Beatitudes) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled..."</i>
Luke 6: 20-26	<i>(The Beatitudes) "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God... Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled..."</i>
Matthew 14:13-21 / Mark 6: 30-44 / John 6: 1-13	<i>Feeding the Five Thousand (The miracle of the loaves and fishes)</i>
Matthew 22: 34-40 / Mark 12: 28-34 Luke 10: 25-28	<i>(The Greatest Commandment) "...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength..." and "you shall love your neighbor as yourself"</i>
Matthew 25:31-45	<i>(The Sheep and the Goats) "...Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink?... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me."</i>

Luke 10: 25-37	<i>The Parable of the Good Samaritan</i>
Luke 11:1-13	<i>(The Lord's Prayer) "Give us this day our daily bread"</i> <i>(Perseverance in Prayer) "For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."</i>
Luke 14:15-24	<i>The Parable of the Great Banquet</i>
John 6:24-35	<i>The Bread from Heaven</i>
John 10:10	<i>Jesus came so that we may have life abundantly</i>
2 Corinthians 9:6-10	<i>(Promise of God's Abundance) "He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."</i>
1 John 3:17-18	<i>(Love One Another) "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth."</i>
James 2:14-16	<i>(Faith with good works) "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? ...If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?"</i>



Reflections

The following reflections are offered as "food for thought," in preparation for worship or small group discussions.

“Table Blessing”

by Rev. Judy Bors Davis

Whenever my church family gathers for a fellowship meal, it is truly a time for celebration and sharing. I am blessed to be part of a very culturally diverse congregation, which is reflective of the community where I live in Geneva, Switzerland. As families arrive and lay their food offerings on the tables, it quickly becomes a “feast for the eyes.” Alongside the familiar salads, hummus dip and brownies lay the cassava cakes from the Philippines, mandazi from Tanzania and Kenya (also known as “puff-puffs” in Nigeria), pakora, fish cutlets and curry channa from India, guacamole, beans and rice from Latin and America, salmon and rice from Japan, olive bread, quiche, to name but a few.

It is our church’s custom to offer up a table blessing before the meal by singing together, “Bendice, Señor, Nuestro Pan.” The words and tune are simple, easy to catch on for those who are new, yet deeply meaningful:

“Bendice, Señor, nuestro pan / Y da pan a los que tienen hambre / Y hambre de justicia a los que tienen pan / Bendice, Señor, nuestro pan

Lord, bless the bread you have given / Give bread to all who are hungry / Give hunger for justice to those with bread / Lord, bless the bread you have given”

It is a holy moment, to be gathered in faith, giving thanks to God for the gift of abundant food before us, while remaining mindful of those who hunger. The simple words of this song-prayer echo the plea of the prophet Isaiah, to satisfy the needs of those who hunger and to provoke a hunger for God’s righteousness among those who have plenty.

Food is a gift from God, given for us and for all God’s creatures – to be nourishment and provide joy, to share with others, so that all may flourish. At the table in fellowship, not only do we share food. We also share our stories. We listen to each other’s stories, and through these encounters we experience grace, as we give and receive in relationship together. In the words of theologian Norman Wirzba, when that sharing is done in the name of God, “eating is the earthly realization of God’s

eternal communion-building love.” (Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating) Such encounters give us a glimpse, perhaps, of the heavenly banquet to come.

The “Ten Commandments of Food,” is an engaging resource that was developed for Christians who seek to engage meaningfully with issues of hunger and food justice in our local and global communities. It is a worthwhile endeavor that can lead to transformative change for ourselves and for others. But don’t hesitate because of the term “commandment,” which for some people conveys a tone of negativity or restrictions.

On the contrary, “The Ten Commandments of Food” invites us to engage positively with the challenges that exist, offering very concrete reflections and action steps. To understand these as guidelines for holy action, means, instead, that we are putting the best of ourselves forward into loving God and others, which can lead to flourishing for all, as God desires.

This is also portrayed with a beauty, simplicity, and freshness in the artwork on the cover by artist Rosie Hilditch. In the blue bowl are fresh greens and tomatoes, which one can imagine were newly cultivated from a nearby garden, then washed, and prepared to eat.

The gardening tools that represent utensils remind us of the labor – and the laborers – required to grow and harvest our food. The tiles around the bowl consist of pages from “The Ten Commandments of Food,” which give respect to our shared commitment to alleviating the causes of hunger in our communities and the world. May God guide and bless us as we join in the work of God’s Kingdom.



“Three Trees and Their Fruit”

by Phil Hilditch

Across the arc of scripture, you can find three trees that produce three different kinds of fruit.

These trees punctuate our grand archetypal story of orientation, disorientation and reorientation—a story that we, as God’s household, find our place in and use to understand ourselves and the world in which we live. Key to our shared story is food, embodied in the fruit of three important trees.

In the beginning, we find a garden full of trees with fruit that is diverse and good for food. Humanity here experiences the generous character of God as they walk in harmony with Him, each other and their created environment. Also in this garden is a tree from which God forbids humanity to eat. However, in an effort to become like God, humanity does what is right in its own eyes, breaks its relationship with God and each other and eats the forbidden fruit, allowing God’s rhythms of generosity to be turned into scarcity and disorder (Gen 3)

At the centre, we find the cross, the tree upon which Christ hung, enthroned as King. Not long before this Christ referred to himself as the vine, and to his followers as his branches, urging them to abide in him that they may bear his fruit (John 15:5). This fruit being that which Christ was anointed for (Luke 4:14, Isa. 61:1- 2 and Isa. 58:6) ‘... to proclaim good news to the poor ... freedom for the prisoners, sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour’, and by extension, ‘to share [our] food with the hungry’ (Isa. 58:7). The fruit of the first tree, therefore, was sin, suffering, struggle and death. The fruit of the second tree, in light of this, is freedom, sight and the year of the Lord’s favour. This fruit is good nutritious food, equitably shared with those who are hungry (Acts 2:44).

The third tree is at the end, the tree of life in Revelation 22:1–5. This tree, also present at creation (Gen. 2:9), reemerges to bookend the tree that brought about humanity’s fall, once again underscoring the healing and restorative intent of God as the tree consistently bears its abundant crop. Humanity is in full harmony with God once again and the nations know health and healing.

Through these three trees, we see the hand of God at work in our story, a story that we are invited into afresh today, a story about fixing what is broken and completing what is unfinished – A story where all things are being made new, a story where we can share our food with those who experience hunger.

Adapted from World Vision’s [Theological Learning brief on Hunger & Nutrition](#)

“True Fasting as Action Towards Justice”

by Dr. Manoj Kurian

To understand Isaiah’s message about true and false fasting, let’s take a minute to remind ourselves of the role and intention of fasting in the context of our Christian faith. This is vital, as fasting is one of the spiritual disciplines in the Christian faith that is no longer practised universally.

Spiritual disciplines are practices found in the Holy Scriptures that contribute to spiritual growth. These help us develop the discipline and habits to ultimately know God and His purposes. Fasting stands along with the other common disciplines of reading and studying the Scripture, praying, meditating, serving, and giving. These are done personally or as families, congregations, or communities. These practices do not imply that we are holy or godly—but help us to become mature people, increasingly reflecting God in every area of our lives, as explained in 1 Timothy 4:7: “Train yourself in godliness..”

Fasting is abstaining from eating or limiting one’s food to very basic or frugal amounts for a period of time. The purpose is twofold: to make oneself humble, to experience vulnerability and total dependence on God, and to give further clarity, sharpness, and meaning to our prayers and worship. The second is to evoke empathy with those who are hungry and in need, strengthen solidarity, and to motivate us to share what we have with those who lack resources.

We fast to assist in seeking guidance and direction from God—as Jesus fasted before launching his ministry (Matthew 4:1-11). We fast as a form of confession as Daniel did (Daniel 9). We fast to prepare for a significant event—such as returning from exile (Ezra 8). We fast as an expression of mourning, loss and death (2 Samuel 1:12). We fast to commemorate and celebrate God’s salvation and rescue (Esther 9).

Isaiah reminds us that all spiritual disciplines can be distorted and become worthless. Our lives should reflect the spiritual disciplines we practice in our relationship with others and how we work for justice and righteousness (V 6-7). I personally learned this as the World Council of Churches joined with many other partners together in prayer to overcome famine in 2017 and 2018. This has further expanded into a beautiful tapestry of ecumenical partners across the world joining together in our Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger.

Even these noble initiatives can become shallow if we are not intentional in our work for justice and concrete transformation in our communities. My work to promote the Food for Life Campaign has made me look at my own life more critically—to see that all transformational justice initiatives must also include our own personal transformation.

The first half of the Ten Commandments describes what a right relationship with God looks like, and the second half of commandments describes how to live rightly with others. The spiritual disciplines were never intended to be purely spiritual.

We cannot limit our understanding and relationship with God—only fixing our gaze on the heavens above, oblivious to the cries of God’s creation and image-bearers here on earth. That would be like only following the first five commandments and leaving the next five commandments void. Or like a coin that is only minted on one side—with the other blank. Both will be discarded as they are not fit for purpose. Let us strive for holiness with humility, love and concern for the other, and a deep hunger and thirst for justice and

“Enough to Share”

by Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

There are shared meals one will never forget. Years ago, I visited churches in Zimbabwe. It was a difficult time with incredibly high inflation and political turmoil with violence. We passed by a church building under construction in the suburbs of Harare. It was a working day. Spontaneously people came when they saw our cars. We sang and prayed together.

We were about to leave, but someone asked us to stay. Women went to their homes and came back soon with chicken, rice, and salad. We sat down and shared a meal together. What a sign of love and welcome. I was blessed by the gracious gift of food, hospitality, and care. It was like light rising in the darkness. I was reminded that God’s kingdom is not a future dream.

It becomes real in the middle of the injustices and hardships we are facing, such as increase of hunger, wars, armed conflicts, climate change, most affecting those who only cause few carbon emissions, etc. God’s kin-dom is real, today, when we share food with one another, explore new ways to grow wheat and vegetables, see Christ in the stranger and become God’s beloved community.

Follow up questions:

- Do you remember meals that touched and even changed your life?
- With whom could you share food? Perhaps you wish to reach out to people with whom you never met for a meal?
- Look at your life and at your community in the light of God’s promises in Isaiah 58,6-12.

Any thoughts on how these promises transform yourself, your community and the world?

“Part of the Whole”

by Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

[The following reflection focuses on artwork highlighted in last year’s (2023) resource guide for the Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger. The image is provided with the artist’s statement below.]

What a colourful image! There are many details to explore... signs of pain and signs of hope. Look at the chain: Will it be taken to shackle people? Or, are shackles broken and forever put aside? Look at the sun. It stands for the source of life, for light, a sign of hope after a dark night of fear and pain. Yet, the power of the sun is also hurting as we face terrible damages from global warming.



The future starts today, if we opt for justice, compassion, love, and togetherness. Basically, it is about realizing that I am part of the whole creation. Look at the illustration of Ronald Abdou: I depend on the sun that shines without me paying for it. I need the trees to produce oxygen and to provide fruits. The bird takes seeds of corn and vegetables from one place to the other. People whom I don't know built the house I live in. I am, because there is this vital net of interactions in God's creation and within humankind. I – together with others of good will - can honor God by sharing food with the hungry, by providing shelter for the poor wanderer, by setting the oppressed free and by seeing God's image in the face of the other. This is the dawn of a bright new day. I wish to draw myself into the picture, come to the cross in repentance and thanksgiving, and realize how I am interwoven with God's creation. I will invite others to make the choice towards a blessed life. By sharing what we received and by protecting God's creation, we will live into God's shalom.

Artist statement: *Inspired by Isaiah 58: 6-12, This image juxtaposes ideas of oppression and oppressive food systems, with possibilities of liberation. As the prophet calls for active work against injustice, a reimagination of oppressive food systems today is depicted. Reading from the choice of plants which echo less overt geographies and histories of oppression (and the environmental impact) to a breaking of physical chains. Moreover, food here is suggested in different stages; unprocessed versus processed. This questions not only the types of food one eats but also the types of food one can access and eat.*

EXAMPLES OF ACTION

Link to Fact Sheet: [WoPA 2024 Hunger Fact Sheet | Global Hunger Crisis | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](#)



United Methodist Church's Fight Against Malnutrition in Eastern Congo

In Eastern Congo's tumultuous landscape, where conflict and displacement loom large, malnutrition poses a grave threat to the region's children. Yet, amidst these challenges, The United Methodist Church stands as a pillar of support, endeavoring to alleviate the suffering of malnourished children through its Maternal, Newborn and Child Health program. With a focus on providing nutritional supplements, medical care, and parental guidance, the church's efforts have touched the lives of over 2,300 malnourished children in 2023, offering hope and healing in the face of adversity.

Led by dedicated professionals like Dr. Marie-Claire Manafundu, the church's initiative not only addresses immediate medical needs but also delves into the root causes of malnutrition, including poverty and food insecurity. Through community outreach, volunteer groups, and psychological support networks, the church's holistic approach aims to empower families and communities, paving the way for a healthier, brighter future for the children of Eastern Congo. Though challenges persist, the church remains resolute in its mission, advocating for collaboration and mobilization to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive and fulfill their potential, free from the grip of malnutrition.

Link: [Church helps thousands of malnourished children in Congo \(umnews.org\)](https://umnews.org)

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration - Restoring crop yields, livelihoods and God-given Hope

In the narrative of Genesis, the Earth is depicted as a realm of abundance, yet in Niger Republic during the 1980s, this promise seemed distant amidst rapid desertification. However, Tony Rinaudo, through perseverance and prayer, unearthed a hidden network—a subterranean forest dormant with life. This revelation birthed Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), a technique harnessing the regenerative power of nature. Over two decades, FMNR spread, reclaiming vast swathes of land and revitalizing ecosystems at a staggering pace.

As trees reclaimed their role as keystones in the landscape, fertility returned to the soil, enabling communities to thrive once more. Tony Rinaudo's vision, rooted in faith and stewardship, empowered families to work alongside God's creation, ushering in the potential for a future of abundance where hunger yields to plenty and nutrition flourishes. Through FMNR, barren lands are transformed into flourishing oases of life, echoing the divine promise of provision and abundance for all.

Link: [FMNR Presentation](#)

Hunger Among the Wheat Fields: Patricia’s Story

Patricia’s nine-year-old granddaughter told her that she wanted to eat with her friends who ate breakfast at school. “They were eating at school because their families couldn’t afford breakfast.

I didn’t know how to explain it to her. And I know her friends’ families,” she said. “They’re good people. Most of them are working. But I didn’t know how to explain to her that their incomes just weren’t enough to always buy food.”

When Patricia retired, she felt called to become involved with Bread for the World through her church. When she learned more about the realities of hunger, it really hit home for her. “I live in Oklahoma,” she said. “We’re surrounded by cows and wheat fields. Food production is the second largest industry in Oklahoma – but we have the [second highest](#) food insecurity rate of any state in the country” [of the United States].

Oklahoma’s children aren’t the only ones facing this problem. Agriculture is the number one industry in Mississippi, but [more people](#) experience hunger in Mississippi than any other state. Many of the states with the highest rates of food insecurity are also populated by thousands of farms. Forty percent of Tennessee is farmland. Georgia has nearly ten million acres of farmland. Louisiana’s agriculture industry is known for sweet potatoes, rice, corn and tomatoes.

But food prices are rising. Food prices increased 9.9 percent in 2022, the largest annual increase since 1979 (USDA). This means a lot of parents are making the heartbreaking decision between food and other basic needs, like housing or healthcare.

How is it possible that in this country of abundance, so many families – including those who work in food production – don’t know where their next meal will come from?

Link: <https://www.bread.org/article/hunger-among-the-wheat-fields-patricias-story/>

Tools: <https://www.bread.org/offering-letters/>



The Ten Commandments of Food and the Ten Commandments of Food for Kids

The “Ten Commandments of Food” is an engaging resource that was developed through the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance / Food for Life Campaign to invite Christians into deeper reflection, dialogue, and positive action around food and hunger issues, in our local communities and around the world.

These are excellent resources for teaching about hunger related issues in a myriad of ways - as part of a sermon series, children’s messages, in church school classes, small group discussions, for families to use at home, or during one’s personal devotional time. The action steps within the Ten Commandments of Food encourage a greater awareness and healthy stewardship of the abundant resources God has provided for us.

LINK: [The Ten Commandments of Food](#)

LINK: [Children & Families Resources](#)



Offering Prayer

(Option 1)

This weekend is the ideal time to take up a special offering to benefit a local or global hunger related organization – and to be more involved with their efforts to end hunger. You may want to invite a representative to share with your congregation about the work they do.

After the offering is taken up, the following Offering Prayer is a good option if the “Ten Commandments of Food” is used in some way during your worship service.

Leader: God of Abundance, We give you thanks for the gift of your bountiful grace and for all the ways you provide for us. Guide us in our desire to live in greater harmony with you, with others, and with your creation. Through your grace, may our actions reflect a renewed commitment of love for our neighbors, so that all who hunger may be nourished.

All: We give thanks for the food we eat, and we ask your blessing upon local farmers and markets.

Leader: Guide us with hope as we learn how to be better stewards of food resources, how they impact our own bodies, and assure that others have access to healthy food. Help us to remain mindful of what you provide and how we use it, not taking it for granted, being wasteful, or holding onto too much.

All: We give thanks for those who labor to grow and harvest and transport our food, for those who prepare and handle our food, and for those who clean up the scraps behind us. May our love for our neighbors lead to more equitable wages and treatment of all laborers and farm workers.

Leader: Grant us the wisdom to advocate for sustainable methods of producing food that minimize damage to our environment, using land and water resources with care, and protecting the biodiversity of seeds, soil, and cultures.

All: With gratitude for your mercy and love, may we be generous in sharing the gift of food with others. AMEN!

Offering Prayer (Option 2)

God of Abundance,

We give you thanks for the good and gracious gifts that you give to us. Help us to share with others without reservation, knowing that there is more than enough to go around.

Remind us that loving our neighbor is part of loving you, and that we can rely on you for our daily bread with each new day. May your perfect love cast away all our fears and open us up to joy of sharing the bounty of your good creation. In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

Prayer of Commitment (Option 1)

Lord God,

Instill in us a sense of your justice. May we never take for granted the food that we have, nor tell ourselves that hunger is not our problem.

Help us to use the voices that we have to speak up against the many injustices that make hunger an ever-present problem.

Amen

christianaid.org.uk



Prayer of Commitment (Option 1)

If using as a congregational prayer in unison, you may wish to change "I" to "we"

O God, when I have food,
help me to remember the hungry.
When I have work,
help me to remember the jobless.
When I have a home,
help me to remember those who have no home at all.
When I am without pain,
help me to remember those who suffer,
And remembering,
help me to destroy my complacency.
Bestir my compassion,
and be concerned enough to help
By word and deed,
those who cry out for what we take for granted.

Amen.

Samuel F. Pugh (d. 1922)

Prayer of Commitment (Option 3)

Leader: May we always be hungry for righteousness;

All: To overcome injustices that bring about hunger!

Leader: May we always be hungry for peace;

All: To overcome insecurity, suffering and displacement!

Leader: May we always yearn to care for each other and the environment;

All: That the earth will remain abundant for all creation! Amen.

World Council of Churches / Food for Life Campaign, 2016

Benediction

Go forth and share food with the hungry.

Go forth and provide the wanderer a shelter.

God will guide you always, and you will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen



