

## “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread” Overview and Ideas

*“Give us this day our daily bread;  
may all the world be clothed and fed.”*



### Introduction

Every few seconds, a child dies from hunger-related causes. In a world of such abundant gifts, populated by millions who call Jesus “Lord”, it is unacceptable that anyone should die for lack of food.

The Upper Susquehanna Synod World Hunger Task Force has developed this collection of resources for use by this synod’s congregations, and for any community who wants to undertake a focused look at the issues of hunger in our world. The materials explore the four-fold aims of the ELCA World Hunger program as a comprehensive and appropriate Christian response to the scourge of hunger. Divided into five sections for use especially during the season of Lent, the materials may also be used in other ways at other times of the year.

The weekly themes include:

1. Addressing the Root Causes of Poverty
2. Relief—Responding to the Immediate Needs of People
3. Development—Ensuring Sustainable Livelihoods
4. Education—Learning to Love Our Neighbors as Ourselves
5. Advocacy—Proclaiming the Lord’s Favor for All

We hope you find these materials useful and engaging for your ministry, and inspiring in the fight against hunger...so that all may eat.

### Options for Use

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread” was designed with flexibility in mind. The materials are divided into five units for use during the season of Lent. Some possible scenarios...

- A congregation offers a lay-led Bible study on Sunday mornings in Lent. During worship, a lay member (or pastor) offers a hunger-focused children’s sermon.
- A congregation enjoys the drama/dialogue sermons during or in addition to the usual sermon time on Sunday mornings.
- A congregation offers a mid-week evening program on Wednesdays. The program begins with a simple meal, followed by a Bible study. A short Lenten Worship service concludes the evening.
- A congregation offers a mid-week noontime, brown-bag lunch Bible study and shares a brief worship service.

- Two (or more) congregations collaborate to take turns hosting a mid-week or Sunday evening program. The hosting congregation provides a simple meal, while members of the other congregation provide the program.
- Five congregations work together to offer the five programs of this series. One leadership team from each church travels to present the same program five times, once at each participating congregation's mid-week or Sunday evening gathering.

Use as many or as few of the resources as you like, however you see fit! See the following for more ways to expand your Lenten program offerings.

## **Meal Ideas**

Many congregations gather for mid-week programs during Lent around food... a natural community-building event! A program focused on our calling to respond to the world's hunger can still begin with sharing food together. A list of various "table prayers" are provided under "Worship Resources" to offer before (and/or after) a meal. Here are some ideas:

- Try keeping all of your meals as simple as possible...like bread and soup, or rice and beans. Resist the temptation for cooks to want to "out-do" each other with fancy food!
- If you normally have a potluck meal, consider challenging participants to bring a dish that costs less than \$3.00 to make, or one that costs less than \$.50 per serving. Encourage meatless dishes, since much of the world lives without access to meat.
- If you normally enjoy a full meal at each program, consider having a "solidarity meal" one week, where all that is served are bowls of rice, and the money that would have been otherwise spent for dinner is designated for World Hunger. Discuss what it would be like to only have rice to eat all day, every day, and not enough to fill you up.
- Consider planning a "hunger meal" program, where the meal is apportioned to participants as food is distributed to members of different socio-economic classes around the world. (For an example, go to: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Activities/Hunger-Meals.aspx>.)
- Consider hosting a "stone soup" supper...inviting people to bring a vegetable or two to add to a large, boiling pot of water. (Plan ahead for this one!) For the "Stone Soup" story, go to: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone\\_soup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_soup).
- If you normally enjoy a full meal at each program, consider expanding the menu to include dishes from various countries around the world...simple, inexpensive meals are best. Try a recipe from "More-With-Less Cookbook" or "Extending the Table: A World Community Cookbook" (both are available from Amazon).

## **Hunger Fundraising Ideas**

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread" is not primarily about fundraising for World Hunger—it's about raising awareness, concern, and compassion for those who suffer from hunger. But raising funds for World Hunger an important way Christians may respond with compassion for the hungry. Here are some fundraising ideas to accompany a Lenten program on hunger:

- Order enough free coin boxes from ELCA World Hunger for your Sunday School, mid-week program participants, or whole congregation. Encourage people to save their spare change or contribute to their boxes at times when they're feeling thankful for how God's blessed them. Receive all these contributions at a special offering at your last gathering, or at worship on Palm Sunday. Order free coin boxes and other resources here: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources.aspx>.
- Invite people to take up a Lenten discipline... "giving up" something they'd normally indulge in, or committing to a positive addition to their spiritual life, like daily prayer or Bible reading. If they save money through their "giving up", invite them to contribute the savings to World Hunger. Or some may want to self-impose a "penalty" contribution any time they waver from their adopted discipline.
- Take orders for "fair trade" coffee, chocolate, or handicrafts benefiting small farmers and craftspeople before middlemen. Find details and resources at: <http://www.lwr.org/fairtrade/index.asp>.
- Take up a "noisy" offering on the Sundays during Lent: pass around metal pans or bowls to collect loose change from people's pockets or purses. Invite people to bring coins from home to add to the collection.
- Instead of a monetary offering, invite mid-week program participants to bring canned goods for a local food pantry or needy families. Offer suggestions for items that may be especially needed, and a reminder not to bring outdated foods.
- Challenge people to donate \$.25 for every faucet in their house (remembering people who have little access to clean water), another \$.25 for every chair (remembering people who hunger), and another \$.25 for every bed (remembering people who have no safe place to lay their head at night).
- Hold a "World's Best X" contest...homemade bread, chili, cake or cookies, etc...and invite participants to "vote" for their favorite with a contribution to World Hunger. (Distribute samples of each food entry, and place a cup or jar next to each to receive the "votes".) Tally the total for each entry, and award the winner a "fabulous prize". Donate all "vote" dollars to World Hunger.
- Challenge the congregation to raise a set figure for World Hunger by a particular date...aim high! "\$500 by May 1", "\$1,000 by Easter", "\$5,000 by Pentecost!" To "sweeten the pot", pledge something outrageous will happen if the goal is met...Pastor (or youth advisor, council president, congregational matriarch/patriarch) will shave his/her head, grow/shave his beard, dye her/his hair green, wear a kilt/toga/hated sports team merchandise, kiss a pig, etc. Use your imagination!
- For a helpful list of fundraising ideas and principles, go to: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Fund-Raising-Ideas.aspx>

## Contributors

This series is a project of the 2010 World Hunger Task Force of the Upper Susquehanna Synod (chair: Rev. Carla Volland; members: Rev. Sarah Hershberger, Kathy Kaufman, Rev. Erwin Roux, Clissie Sheitler, Rev. Beth Ann L. Stone). Contributing writers include these Upper

Susquehanna Synod members and friends: Rev. Gunther Bernhart, Rev. Catrina Ciccone, Rev. Theodore Cockley, Rev. Eric Deibler, Rev. Sarah Hershberger, Rev. Detlef Huckfeldt, Kathy Kaufman, Rev. John Koons, Marissa Harris Krey, Rev. Erwin Roux, Rev. Breen Sipes, Rev. Patrick Sipes, Rev. Beth Ann L. Stone, Clissie Sheitler, Rev. Carla Volland. *We give thanks to God for their talents and generosity in sharing them for the sake of hungry people everywhere.*

## Related links

Explore the ELCA World Hunger website to learn more about the problem of hunger:

- Create your own learning experience in the area of hunger education that interests you most: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Hunger-Education-Toolkits.aspx>
- Hunger facts, hunger “by the numbers” in the world, in the US, in children: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/Hunger-Facts.aspx>
- Stories of how donations to World Hunger are making a difference in peoples’ lives: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Stories.aspx>
- Play “Hunger Jeopardy”, a downloadable game designed to test your knowledge of hunger issues: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Activities/Jeopardy.aspx>
- Find resources for exploring hunger education with children, youth, and adults: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Generational-Materials.aspx>
- Download a quiz to test your knowledge of hunger issues: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Activities/Quiz.aspx>
- Learn more about how ELCA World Hunger is helping to fight malaria and HIV/AIDS: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Our-Work/HIV-and-AIDS-and-Malaria.aspx>

Get the latest news on speaking out for people who are hungry in Pennsylvania at the LAMPa website (Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania): <http://lamp.org/>.

How rich are you? Enter your annual income in the calculator on this website, and find out how you rate compared to the rest of the world’s population: <http://www.globalrichlist.com/>.

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation’s decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Learn more about them at: <http://www.bread.org/>.

# “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

## Bible Studies

### Week One

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#### **Exodus 16:2-8; 13-26**

*“ELCA World Hunger Appeal: Addressing the Root Causes of Poverty”*

God rescued the Hebrew people from slavery to the Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and the economic system that kept them oppressed. The Royal family, supported by the Egyptian military and priesthood, kept order in the realm by exploiting the labor of the poor and allowing the wealthier classes to enjoy the fruits of their labor. This happened in what was considered to be the “bread basket” of the ancient world, the Nile basin. In rescuing the people through the mighty acts of Passover and Red Sea crossing God was giving birth to a people who would be a contrast to the economic order they had left. Bringing them out to the wilderness, God taught the people a new way of living when the people began to complain about the food supply. God would provide quail in the evening and manna in the morning. What the people did with the manna was meant to establish a new way of economic sharing once the people reached the promised land. Each morning the people gathered enough for the people living with them in their own tents. Everyone had enough, no one had too much or too little. Those who collected more than they needed and stored it up found that it bred worms and became foul overnight. God also provided twice as much manna on the sixth day of the week to be eaten on both the sixth day and the seventh day, the Sabbath day, so that the people could rest from their work on the Sabbath. The manna stored from the sixth day to the seventh day did not grow foul. The people learned through this experience that the world as created by God is abundant with enough for everyone. Storing excess is based on fear of scarcity and does not honor the intentions of God. God provides in abundance enough that people are able to rest regularly from their labors. Honoring these learnings would enable the people of God to be a contrast to the economic order that they had left behind in Egypt.

#### **Questions for Discussion**

1. “Storing excess is based on fear of scarcity and does not honor the intentions of God.” How does this statement challenge you? How does this affect your willingness to be generous?
2. How do you relate to trusting God that the stored manna will be good on the Sabbath?
3. God has accomplished our rescue from sin and death by the death and resurrection of Jesus, and God provides us with all we need from day to day. Do we complain even in the midst of such rescue and provision? Why?

### Week Two

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#### **Matthew 25: 31-40**

*“Relief: Responding to the Immediate Needs of People.”*

Jesus’ portrayal of the judgment of the nations comes at the end of a long collection of sayings about readiness for the coming of the Son of Man. The good news within this particular saying is the invitation to those at his right hand to “Come you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you...” When one inherits, they have done nothing to receive but someone has died and left something to them. The blessed inheritors of the Kingdom receive as

a free gift the life and salvation left to them by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They have received grace and mercy without works of their own. At the same time, it is because they have received such grace that they are empowered to produce the good works and good fruits of the Kingdom. They feed and offer drink to the hungry and thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger and provide care and visitation to the sick and imprisoned. As they provide such care they do it for Jesus in disguise, the living Lord present with the hurt and broken of the world. Their work is not done to affect a relationship with Jesus, but to reflect the relationships he has already granted them by grace.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What is the relationship between good works and salvation? Why do we produce good works and good fruits?
2. How do you encourage people to know the presence of Jesus in the hurt and broken of the world?
3. We are to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man. Christ will bring in a new creation where all will have enough. How can this understanding help us to feed our neighbor now?

### **Week Three**

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#### **Luke 9:10-17**

*“Development: Ensuring Sustainable Livelihoods”*

Jesus feeding the five-thousand is a story that reminds us of two Old Testament stories: one is the Feeding of the Israelites in the wilderness with manna following the exodus (Ex. 16:2-15), and the other is the prophet Elisha feeding one hundred people with twenty loaves during a famine (2 Kings 4:42-44). In both stories there was enough to feed all who were hungry and then some. The abundance that God provides is acknowledged and it is asserted that no place or predicament is beyond the presence and aid of God. So when the disciples urge Jesus to send the hungry crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find food and housing, he will have none of it. They are in a deserted place, and the disciples can only see the option of relying on the currently available marketplaces to meet the people’s needs. Jesus challenges this notion with the command “You give them something to eat.” Jesus echoes the words that Elisha used when faced with twenty loaves and one hundred people: “Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’” This command is met with resistance and faithlessness in both stories, but the Word of the Lord prevails and scarcity is transformed into a demonstration of the abundance of God to meet the present need and enough to give confidence for the next meal.

When Jesus takes, blesses, breaks and gives bread to his followers he reminds them of the lessons learned by their ancestors in the wilderness story. He also points them forward to the

shape of the Eucharistic meal that will define the church to come. In this meal Jesus forgives sins, renews his covenant, and challenges his followers to look beyond human limits and step out to the encouraging command, “You give them something to eat.”

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. The ELCA World Hunger Appeal uses the concept of accompaniment, walking alongside people, to help them recognize their God-given resources. How is this happening in our Gospel story?
2. God provides an abundance that we may not initially recognize. How did Jesus and the disciples look differently at what was available?
3. How does the Eucharist motivate and teach us to “Give them something to eat?”

## **Week Four**

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### **Mark 12:28-34**

*“Education: Learning to Love our Neighbors as Ourselves”*

Up until this encounter with a scribe, Mark’s gospel has shown Jesus as being little understood by those around him. The disciples are able to claim Jesus as Messiah, but respond with confusion when he predicts his impending suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus must teach them that the kingdom of God is not about being the greatest or being lord over another, but being last of all, servant of all, and one who welcomes a child in his name. When Jesus arrives in Jerusalem for his final week he is encountered by the leaders of the religious establishment, who try to trap him with questions about taxes and the resurrection. Jesus responds by teaching them about a God to whom they should render up themselves, one who raises the living from the dead. Although Jesus at times seems weary of such a faithless generation that does not fully understand him, he continues to teach them diligently. At last, in this scribe is found one who shares a common faith with Jesus. They are in agreement that there is no greater commandment than the love of God and neighbor. Jesus’ response to the scribe joins together the “Shema,” the prayer of Israel commanded in Deuteronomy 6:5-6, and the love commandment found in Leviticus 19:18. The confession “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one,” cautions the hearer that there are many other forces in life that may demand our loyalty, but a wholehearted loyalty is to be given to God alone. This loyalty is demonstrated practically in the love of neighbor. To love our neighbor as we love ourselves is to offer the service and welcome that Jesus taught his disciples. Jesus and the scribe are able to share this faith and Jesus encourages the scribe with the words “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” The ministry that Jesus passes on to his followers includes teaching with such persistence that even in the midst of confusion and opposition, the Holy Spirit will move people to embrace the Great Commandment.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What experiences or persons have taught you about hunger and poverty?
2. How have you shared what you know about hunger?

3. How can we be persistent in our teaching?

## **Week Five**

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### **Luke 4:16-21**

*“Advocacy: Proclaiming the Lord’s Favor for All”*

After Jesus’ baptism, he began his ministry in the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and coming in time to his home town of Nazareth. There on the Sabbath day, he stood up to read and was handed the scroll of Isaiah. He chose to read the verses in which the prophet describes himself as being anointed with the Spirit to bring good news to the poor and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. The “year of the Lord’s favor” is a reference to the Year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25. Behind the prophet’s message throughout the Old Testament was a call to return to the covenant that God had made with Israel after their rescue from bondage in Egypt. The people had not lived as a nation contrasting with their neighbors as the covenant had called them to do. The people sinned as individuals and a collective nation in their greed of gain, their exploitation of the poor, and their trust in their own might for national security rather than the promise of God. Isaiah, and Jesus in turn, were reminding the people of the covenant laws which were to reflect their status as a blessed people and ensure that there would not be anyone in need among them. The Jubilee year was to come after a period of seven times seven years, forty-nine years plus one, the fiftieth year, a time when “you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.” That liberty would include measures that addressed a major root of poverty in that day, namely when a family had to sell inherited land to pay off a debt and a larger landowner would keep them the family in service as laborers. The Jubilee year would serve as a correction to these events by releasing each community member from debt (Lev. 25:53-42), return land sold to pay a debt to the original owners (25:13, 25-28), and freeing slaves (25:47-55). This would remind the people that the land belongs to God and that they are a freed people who may not live as they once did in Egypt. When Jesus chose to identify himself with the message of Isaiah, he was announcing a time when the poor and the oppressed would be freed. His followers would keep the spirit of the Jubilee year in their love for neighbor.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. In a statement on “Global Hunger and Poverty” the ELCA World Hunger Appeal states that “the United States could significantly help in the fight against poverty by canceling some decades-old debts of the world’s poorest countries...” How would this work with the biblical idea of the year of Jubilee? Do you agree with this way of addressing one of the root causes of poverty? Why?
2. Do you know of any efforts in your community to advocate for those living in poverty?
3. What is the role of the church in attempting to influence public policy?

## “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread” Worship Resources

### Table Prayers

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Blessed are you, O Lord our God. Like a mother hen shielding her chicks, you nurture and protect us. We praise you for your care: Blessed be God forever! Gather all the hungry and homeless, O loving God, under the warmth of your wings, and so give life to the world, that your name may be praised now and ever. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

O God, like a loving father you have provided a fatted calf for our table. We praise you for the plentiful food you prepare. Save us from the lot of the prodigal son, wasting your goods foolishly. Save us from the lot of the elder son, hoarding your gifts selfishly. All the earth's stores are yours: We praise and bless your bounty, O God. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

The eyes of all look to you and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bountiful goodness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

God, bless this food we are about to receive. Give bread to those who hunger, and hunger for justice to us who have bread. Amen. (*Nicaragua*)

Lord Christ, we ask you to spread our table with your mercy. And may you bless with your gentle hands the good things you have given us. We know that whatever we have comes from your lavish heart, for all that is good comes from you. And...having received from your hands, let us give with equally generous hands to those who are poor, breaking bread and sharing our bread with them. For you have told us that whatever we give to the poor, we give to you. (*Alcuin of York, abbot of Tours 735-804*)<sup>4</sup>

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let your gifts to us be blessed.  
Blessed be God who is our Bread, may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest. Let these gifts to us be blessed.  
Give us, Lord, our daily bread. Let all the world be clothed and fed. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed.  
O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, and His mercy endures forever. Amen.

Give comfort, O Lord, to all who are torn from their homes and their loved ones by war, famine or the cruelty of their neighbors; grant that we who dwell secure in this insecure world may be generous in caring for our displaced sisters and brothers. (*Somalia*)

Bless, O Lord, this food for thy use, and make us ever mindful of the wants and needs of others. Amen.

For food in a world where many walk in hunger,  
For friends in a world where many walk alone,  
For faith in a world where many walk in fear,  
We give you thanks, O Lord. Amen.

Lord, let us hunger enough that we not forget the world's hunger. Lord, let us hunger enough that we may have bread to share. Lord, let us hunger enough to we may long for the Bread of Heaven. Lord, let us hunger enough that we may be filled. But, O Lord, let us not hunger so much that we seek after that which is not bread, nor try to live by bread alone. Amen.<sup>5</sup>

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellow human beings throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands this day their daily bread, and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen. (*Mother Theresa of Calcutta*)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> From "Blessing and Beseeking: Prayers on Food and Hunger" (LCA, 1985-1987) by Gail Ramshaw.

<sup>3</sup> From Luther's "Small Catechism".

<sup>4</sup> From the Harper-Collins Book of Prayers, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted from "Banquet of Praise" (Bread for the World, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> From "Book of Common Worship" (Westminster/John Knox Press).

## **Brief Order for Lenten Worship**

*(Service outline for use by worship leader[s] without participants' bulletins)*

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### **CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>**

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God is our light and our hope, our refuge and our strength. In this season of desert pilgrimage, let us remember the prophet's vision: If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your need in parched places, and make your bones strong. [Isaiah 58:10a, 11a]

### **HYMN**

Week One:	“Take My Life, That I May Be” or “Christ, Be Our Light”	ELW 583 or 685; LBW 406 ELW 715
Two:	“For the Fruit of All Creation” or “Now It Is Evening”	ELW 679; WOV 760; LBW 563 ELW 572
Three:	“Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service” or “Great God, Your Love Has Called Us”	ELW 712; LBW 423 ELW 358; WOV 666
Four:	“O God of Mercy, God of Light” or “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”	ELW 714; LBW 425 ELW 708; WOV 765
Five:	“Praise and Thanksgiving” or “We Come to the Hungry Feast”	ELW 689; LBW 409 ELW 479; WOV 766

### **PRAYER<sup>2</sup>**

Let us pray. Eternal God, whose image we bear: You have created us to live by more than bread alone. Nourish us through your Word and release us from the selfishness born of fear. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### **READING(S) FROM SCRIPTURE**

Week One:	Exodus 16:2-8, 13-26 (optional second text: Luke 12:13 – 20)
Two:	Matthew 25:31-40 (optional: Isaiah 58:1-10)
Three:	Luke 9:10 – 17 (optional: Luke 22:14-23)
Four:	Mark 12:28 – 34 (optional: Acts 2:42 – 47)
Five:	Luke 4:16 – 21 (optional: Proverbs 31:8-9)

### **RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD**

Children's Message (*see resource*)  
and/or Drama/Dialogue Sermon (*see resource*)  
and/or Homily (*not provided*)

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Prayers may be offered for people who are hungry,  
for people who lack clean water,  
for people living without adequate shelter,  
for refugees,  
for people who advocate for the powerless,  
for orphans, children, and widows,  
for people living with HIV/AIDS, and people working to find cures,  
for your local food pantry,  
for teachers,  
for peacemakers,  
for the healing of the world.*  
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

### HYMN

Week One:	“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”	ELW 674; WOV 754
	or “When Pain of the World Surrounds Us”	ELW 704
Two:	“The Lord Now Sends Us Forth”	ELW 538
	or “In Christ There Is No East or West”	ELW 650; LBW 359
Three:	“To Be Your Presence”	ELW 546
	or “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending”	ELW 678; LBW 408
Four:	“Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises”	ELW 535; WOV 722
	or “God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind”	ELW 400
Five:	“We Are Called”	ELW 720
	or “God of Grace and God of Glory”	ELW 705; LBW 415

### BLESSING<sup>3</sup>

Merciful God, you ask us to cleanse our hearts, to loose the bonds of oppression, and to repair the ancient ruins. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, that we might pour ourselves out for the hungry and offer refreshment to those who thirst. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God!**

<sup>1,2,3</sup> From "Pour Yourself Out for the Hungry: A Resource for Worship," ©1993 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **Lenten Worship: Week One**

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### **CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>**

In the presence of a God whose word has called the earth and the stars into being,

**We stand in awe.**

In the presence of a God whose arms have held children,

**We stand in trust.**

In the presence of a God whose breath has stirred within us and caused our hearts to thirst for justice,

**We stand in need.**

Before you, Giver of Life, we come in faith, in search of love and justice and wholeness.

**Be with us; hear us, we pray. Amen.**

### **HYMN**

“Take My Life, That I May Be”  
or “Christ, Be Our Light”

ELW 583 or 685; LBW 406  
ELW 715

### **PRAYER<sup>2</sup>**

Let us pray. Eternal God, whose image we bear: You have created us to live by more than bread alone. Nourish us through your Word and release us from the selfishness born of fear. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### **READING(S) FROM SCRIPTURE**

#### **Exodus 16:2-8, 13-26 (NRSV)**

<sup>2</sup>The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. <sup>5</sup>On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” <sup>6</sup>So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, <sup>7</sup>and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?” <sup>8</sup>And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD.”

<sup>13</sup>In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. <sup>14</sup>When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup>When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. <sup>16</sup>This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all

providing for those in their own tents.”<sup>17</sup> The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less.<sup>18</sup> But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.<sup>19</sup> And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over until morning.”<sup>20</sup> But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul. And Moses was angry with them.<sup>21</sup> Morning by morning they gathered it, as much as each needed; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

<sup>22</sup>On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, two omers apiece. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses,<sup>23</sup> he said to them, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy sabbath to the LORD; bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.’”<sup>24</sup> So they put it aside until morning, as Moses commanded them; and it did not become foul, and there were no worms in it.<sup>25</sup> Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field.<sup>26</sup> Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is a sabbath, there will be none.”

**(Optional) Luke 12:13 - 20 (NRSV)** <sup>13</sup>Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.”<sup>14</sup> But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?”<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”<sup>16</sup> Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly.<sup>17</sup> And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’<sup>18</sup> Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.<sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’

## **RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD**

Children’s Message

and/or Drama/Dialogue Sermon

and/or Homily

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION<sup>3</sup>**

Let us pray. Holy God, whose loving kindness is everlasting: Lift the burden of all who are weary from the search for food and refresh those who are parched from thirst. Lord, in mercy,  
**As you sent manna in days of old, grant living bread in our wilderness.**

O God, source of all consolation: Comfort with the sure sense of your presence all who feel forsaken, whose hope is dried up. Lord, in mercy,

**As you sent manna in days of old, grant living bread in our wilderness.**

Lord Jesus, who cried out in thirst upon the cross: open our ears to all cries of affliction, and through us provide food and drink. Lord, in mercy,

**As you sent manna in days of old, grant living bread in our wilderness.**

God our creator, who makes our bones strong: through our prayers and gifts heal the ravages of poverty and disease, that those now suffering may one day leap for joy. Lord, in mercy,

**As you sent manna in days of old, grant living bread in our wilderness.**

Merciful God, you ask us to cleanse our hearts, to loose the bonds of oppression, and to repair the ancient ruins. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, that we might pour ourselves out for the hungry and offer refreshment to those who thirst. In the name of Jesus we pray;

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

### **HYMN**

“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” ELW 674; WOV 754

or “When Pain of the World Surrounds Us” ELW 704

### **BLESSING<sup>4</sup>**

Go forth in peace, and be of good courage; hold fast that which is good, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And may the God who fills the hungry with good things fill us all with Christ-like love and with a consuming hunger for justice in our land and in our world.

**Amen.**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God!**

<sup>1,4</sup> Reprinted from “Banquet of Praise” (Bread for the World, 1990).

<sup>2,3</sup> From "Pour Yourself Out for the Hungry: A Resource for Worship," ©1993 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## Lenten Worship: Week Two

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### CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>

Rejoice people of God! In Christ there is hope and peace.

**But how can we rejoice? The world is full of hunger, agony, conflict, pain.**

Rejoice people of God! The victory is won in Christ.

**But how? Our brothers and sisters cry out for justice, for love, for food.**

Rejoice people of God! For in God there is justice and love. God is the source of everything.

**But how? The problems are big and the injustice overwhelming.**

Rejoice people of God! For in you Christ lives and all things are possible.

**Rejoice! We are God's tools of justice and love. Through God we can work for peace and feed one another.**

### HYMN

“For the Fruit of All Creation”  
or “Now It Is Evening”

ELW 679; WOV 760; LBW 563  
ELW 572

### PRAYER *(Roman rite)*

Let us pray. All-powerful Father, God of goodness, you provide for all your creation. Give us an effective love for our brothers and sisters who suffer from lack of food. Help us do all we can to relieve their hunger, that they may serve you with carefree hearts. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

### READING FROM SCRIPTURE

#### Matthew 25:31-40 (NRSV)

[Jesus said,]<sup>31</sup>“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup>and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

<sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?’ <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?’ <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup>And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

### RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

and/or Drama/Dialogue Sermon

and/or Homily

**RESPONSIVE READING** (*Isaiah 58:6-11*)

This, says Yahweh, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke;

**Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke;**

Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;

**Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.**

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall be healed quickly;

**Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of Yahweh shall be your rear guard.**

Then you shall call, and Yahweh will answer. You shall cry for help, and the Creator will say: Here I am!

**If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation, and malicious speech;**

If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted;

**Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday;**

The Creator will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails.

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**HYMN**

“The Lord Now Sends Us Forth” ELW 538

or “In Christ There Is No East or West” ELW 650; LBW 359

**BLESSING**<sup>2</sup> (*Paraphrase of the prayer of St. Francis*)

Lord, make us instruments of Thy grace:

**Where there is oppression, let us sow justice;**

Where dignity has been diminished, let us be compassionate;

**Where distrust has been bred, let us be gentle;**

Where there is desperation, let us bring hope;

**Where there is apathy, let us become activists;**

Where there has been loss, let us listen in patience.

**O gracious God, grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to desire for ourselves as to speak up for the needy.**

For it is in giving that we receive; it is in feeding the hungry that we are invited to your Heavenly banquet; it is as instruments of grace that we return to You.

**Amen.**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God!**

<sup>1,2</sup> Reprinted from “Banquet of Praise” (Bread for the World, 1990).

## Lenten Worship: Week Three

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### CONFESSION<sup>1</sup>

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose.

**I gave them for a moment then withdrew them, for the work was hard.**

You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice.

**I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.**

You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty.

**I closed them for I did not want to see.**

You asked for my life that you might work through me.

**I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.**

**Lord, forgive my efforts to serve you only when it is convenient for me to do so,  
only in those places where it is safe to do so,**

**and only with those who make it easy to do so.**

**Forgive me. Renew me. And send me out. Amen. (South Africa)**

### HYMN

“Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service”  
or “Great God, Your Love Has Called Us”

ELW 712; LBW 423

ELW 358; WOV 666

### PRAYER<sup>2</sup>

Let us pray. Living God, open our hearts, that we may feel the breath of your spirit. Unclench our hands, that we may reach out to one another. Open our lips, that we may drink in the delight and wonder of life. Unclog our ears, to hear your agony in our humanity. Open our eyes that we may see Christ in friend and stranger. Breathe your Spirit into us and touch our lives with the life of Christ, in whose name we pray.

**Amen.**

### READING(S) FROM SCRIPTURE

#### Luke 9:10 - 17 (NRSV)

<sup>10</sup>On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida. <sup>11</sup>When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured.

<sup>12</sup>The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.” <sup>13</sup>But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” <sup>14</sup>For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” <sup>15</sup>They did so and made them all sit down. <sup>16</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed

and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. <sup>17</sup>And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

**(Optional) Luke 22:14-23 (NRSV)**

<sup>14</sup>When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup>Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup>And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup>But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. <sup>22</sup>For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” <sup>23</sup>Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

**RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD**

Children’s Message  
and/or Drama/Dialogue Sermon  
and/or Homily

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION<sup>3</sup>**

Let us pray for all our fellow men, women, and children whose pain and misery come to us every day in the newspapers, on television, over the Internet, and face to face. The congregation’s response to each petition will be: “We pray to the Lord.”

For the millions who are starving to death,

**We pray to the Lord.**

For those who are without adequate shelter...**(We pray to the Lord.)**

For those who lack clothing...**(We pray...)**

For those whose human rights are ignored...

For all who suffer from illness...

For refugees who have had to flee from their lands...

For all who are chronically hungry...

For greater action on our part to feed the hungry...

For all who have to live with injustice...

For those who have seldom known peace...

For all who have lost hope....

For those who harden their hearts against the poor....

For all who work to eliminate world hunger...

For the unity of the human family,

**We pray to the Lord.**

May your mercy be on all of us, Lord, as we search for better ways to heal and serve your people. Give us insight, sensitivity, creativity, strength, and courage as we seek together ways to end hunger in the world. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**HYMN**

“To Be Your Presence”

ELW 546

or “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending”

ELW 678; LBW 408

**BLESSING<sup>4</sup>**

As the earth keeps turning, hurtling through space, and night falls and day breaks from land to land, let us remember people—waking, sleeping, being born and dying—one world, one humanity. Let us go from here in peace. Amen.

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God!**

<sup>1</sup> From “What Do You Know About Hunger?” (Church World Service).

<sup>2,3,4</sup> Reprinted from “Banquet of Praise” (Bread for the World, 1990).

## Lenten Worship: Week Four

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### CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>

God, show kindness and bless us,  
**And make your face to smile on us!**  
For then the earth will acknowledge your ways,  
**And all nations know your power to save.**  
Let the nations praise you, O God,  
**Let all the nations praise you.**  
Let the nations shout and sing for joy,  
**Since you bring true justice to the world.**  
The soil has given its harvest,  
**God, our God, has blessed us.**  
May God bless us, and let God be feared,  
**To the very ends of the earth! Amen.**

### HYMN

“O God of Mercy, God of Light”            ELW 714; LBW 425  
or “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”    ELW 708; WOV 765

### PRAYER<sup>2</sup>

Let us pray. God of the hungry, Shelter of the homeless, we are in need of your mercy. We ask your blessing on children everywhere who are in danger today. Bless all who are hungry and homeless, all who suffer from injustice. Provide them with the food they need; shelter them in the warmth of your love, and safeguard them from the evil that rages around them. Turn our eyes and hearts to their needs. Give us courage to act for their good. We ask this, relying on your compassion and confident of your love. Amen.

### READING(S) FROM SCRIPTURE

#### Mark 12:28 - 34 (NRSV)

<sup>28</sup>One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup>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.’ <sup>31</sup>The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” <sup>32</sup>Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; <sup>33</sup>and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” <sup>34</sup>When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

**(Optional) Acts 2:42 - 47 (NRSV)**

<sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup>As we came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds<sup>£</sup> to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home<sup>£</sup> and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD**

Children's Message  
and/or Drama/Dialogue Sermon  
and/or Homily

**RESPONSIVE READING<sup>3</sup>**

**The Lord calls us to be servants. Rejoice!**

Be generous and share your food with the poor. You will be blessed for it. (*Proverbs 22:9*)

**If you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship.** (*Proverbs 14:31*)

Defend the rights of the poor and the orphans; be fair to the needy and the helpless. (*Ps. 82:3*)

**A good person knows the rights of the poor, but wicked people cannot understand such things.** (*Proverbs 28:7*)

Treat foreigners as you would your own, and love them as you love yourselves. (*Lev. 19:34a*)

**Do not follow the majority when they do wrong, or when they give testimony that perverts justice.** (*Exodus 23:2*)

Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless.

**Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.**

(*Proverbs 31:8-9*)

**Lord, help us love you with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbors as ourselves. We rejoice that we are able to love, because you first loved us; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**HYMN**

"Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises" ELW 535; WOV 722

or "God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind" ELW 400

**BLESSING<sup>4</sup>**

May the truth which makes us free, the hope that never dies, and the love which casts out fear, visit us and redeem us, till the day-spring breaks and the shadows feel away. Amen.

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God!**

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Reprinted from "Banquet of Praise" (Bread for the World, 1990).

## Lenten Worship: Week Five

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### CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>

Sisters and brothers, Arise! Arise and lift your hearts!

Arise and lift your eyes! Arise and lift your voices!

The living God, the living, moving Spirit of God  
has called us together...in witness, in celebration, in struggle.

Reach out toward each other. Our God reaches out towards us! Let us worship God!

Women: We give thanks, God of wonder, for the marvel of creation that surrounds us.

Men: For all the wonders of life you reveal to us.

Women: May our lives and our world be reawakened and reformed by the power of your  
grace.

Men: Let us see your glory, your justice and your peace.

All: **You have given us your world and placed the future in our hands. Nourish us, O  
God; inspire and empower us to make your Reign manifest in our day. Amen.**

### HYMN

“Praise and Thanksgiving”

ELW 689; LBW 409

or “We Come to the Hungry Feast”

ELW 479; WOV 766

### PRAYER<sup>2</sup> (*Marian Wright Edelman*)

Let us pray. O God, grant us Your vision in our time. Help us to write it so large that even a runner can see it. Make it so compelling that even a cynic will pause, so convincing that a skeptic will risk trying to bring hope to others, and so inspiring that the committed will stand courageously in faith, leaving the results to you. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

### READING FROM SCRIPTURE

#### Luke 4:16 - 21 (NRSV)

<sup>16</sup>When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

<sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

## RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

Children's Message  
and/or Drama/Dialogue Sermon  
and/or Homily

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION<sup>3</sup>

- Men: When, O Lord, will we learn to value the life of every single one of your children?  
Women: When, O Lord, will we be willing and able to forgive others as you have forgiven us again and again?  
Men: When, O Lord, will we be faithful in speaking your word with courage, clarity, and humility?  
Women: When, O Lord, will we actively work for justice for all rather than limiting our ministries to works of charity?  
Men: When, O Lord, will we turn from self centered living to your way of compassionate living for others?  
Women: When, O Lord, will we truly see you in the eyes of the homeless, the hungry, the lonely, the ill, and the prisoner?  
Men: When, O Lord, will we turn from the ways of violence and oppression to your ways of peace and reconciliation?  
Women: When, O Lord, will we open our hearts, minds, and souls to receive the transforming power of your love?  
Men: When, O Lord, will we have the courage to say "yes" to your call to "Come and follow me"?  
Women: When, O Lord?  
All: **Let it be now! Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

### HYMN

"We Are Called" ELW 720  
or "God of Grace and God of Glory" ELW 705; LBW 415

### BLESSING<sup>4</sup>

Go into the world in peace!  
**And take peace to a world that desperately needs it.**  
Go into the world in faith!  
**Trusting God to lead you, trusting people to receive you.**  
Go into the world with hope!  
**With God's presence before you and human dreams to carry you.**  
Go into the world with love!  
**Serving with those in whom Christ lives, and laboring for those for whom Christ died.**  
Go in peace, faith, hope and love!  
**Thanks be to God!**

May Almighty God grant us the grace to persevere in all that we have undertaken, that we may be good and faithful stewards over the trust God has given us, even unto the end. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God!**

<sup>1,3,4</sup> Reprinted from “Banquet of Praise” (Bread for the World, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> From “What Do You Know About Hunger?” (Church World Service).

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## **“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”**

### **Drama/Dialogue: Week One**

*Characters: Narrator, Sarah (a compassionate worker for justice), Betty ( a person in need), Pastor( still new to the congregation). As the scene begins, Pastor and Sarah are seated behind a table. A couple of “food bags” are within reach. The narrator introduces the scene, then moves aside, off-stage.*

Narrator: We are in a food pantry of a small village in rural Pennsylvania. The pantry serves about 500 families per month, and about eighty on a given evening. The pantry gives out food bags, clothes, and on special occasions, turkeys and hams. Tonight, however, is slow, because of a snowstorm warning. Only a few people have shown up so far. Sarah, who has worked at the pantry several years, knows most of the people who come in to the pantry. She and the new pastor are at the reception desk.

Pastor: How long have you been volunteering here at the food pantry?

Sarah: It’s been quite a while. I don’t know...about ten years.

P: When I asked at our church[es] for an extra collection for the food pantry I got this gut feeling that some people are not too fond of this project. I’m not sure, but I think they’re opposed to it.

S: *(becomes angry)* We Americans grow more and more wealthy; money is becoming a kind of narcotic for us. We hardly notice our own prosperity or the poverty of so many others. We have more and more money, and less and less generosity -- less and less public money for the needy, less charity for the neighbor.

P: *(agreeing)* Though many of us are well intentioned, we’ve invested our lives in consumerism. We have a love affair with "more" -- and we will never have enough.

*(The door opens and a woman enters.)*

S: Hi, Betty! How are things going?

Betty: I had a long day. I’m glad I got here before the storm.

S: I sure hope the storm will wait till we close. You won’t have to wait today for anything. So you’ll be out of here fast.

B: Wonderful! That is good news.

S: *(turning towards the pastor)* Betty used to be our neighbor.

B: Those were the good old days, till I got divorced. Now I’m a working mom, taking care of everything, needing help wherever I can get it. This food pantry is a blessing.

- P: I noticed that the pantry serves a lot of people who are working full time. Somehow that doesn't seem right. There should be a way for everyone who works to make a decent living.
- S: Well, I don't know. Sometimes people make bad choices. They want it all. Then they buy way too much and put it all on their credit cards. You know how that goes.
- B: Just look at me: I married young, and right away we built this big house. Everything had to be the newest and the best: hardwood floors, flattop stove, central heat and air-conditioning. We were young; our motto was "live for today and pay for it later". The bank encouraged us to do so. We put a lot on our credit cards. I had just finished my education and started to work when the first baby arrived, and a little over a year later our second boy came. It was too much!
- P: That IS a lot to manage. Did you have any help?
- B: My grandmother pitched in, and my in-laws helped out with the kids. My husband had been on active duty in Iraq and he had also been in Afghanistan. When my husband came back he wasn't the same any more. We tried, but it didn't work out. He got violent. I was afraid of him. One night I took the kids and left. *(she pauses)* Now we live with my Grammy. I tell you, sometimes I think my life is a mess. Everything is piling up. Bills. Diapers. Dishes. I'm exhausted! It's almost 8:00 p.m. and when I get home, there's more work waiting. So, I better keep moving. See you next week! *(she leaves)*
- S: *(sighs...then stands, walks around the table, and speaks to the audience)* The Bible starts out with abundance. It keeps saying, "It is good, it is good, it is very good." Later, God blesses Abraham, Sarah and their family. God tells them to be a blessing, to bless the people of all nations. Then somehow everything gets mixed up.
- P: *(standing and moving to stand next to Sarah)* I guess it started in Egypt with Pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh dreams that there will be a famine in the land. So Pharaoh gets organized to administer, control and monopolize the food supply. Pharaoh introduces the principle of scarcity into the world. For the first time in the Bible, someone says, "There's not enough. Let's start storing up."
- Narr.: *(entering the scene, and standing next to Pastor)* Pharaoh hires Joseph to manage the monopoly. In Genesis 47 when the crops fail and the Hebrew peasants run out of food, they come to Joseph. And on behalf of Pharaoh, Joseph says, "What's your collateral?" They give up their land for food, and then, the next year, they give up their cattle. By the third year of the famine they have no collateral left but themselves. And that's how the children of Israel become slaves -- through an economic transaction.
- P: When the children of Israel are in the wilderness, beyond the reach of Egypt, they still look back and think, "If only we had died. All the world's glory is in Egypt and with Pharaoh." But when they finally turn around and look into the wilderness, they see the glory of God.

Narr: In answer to the people's fears and complaints, something extraordinary happens. God's love comes trickling down in the form of bread. They had never before received bread as a free gift that they couldn't control on their own. The gift of life is indeed given by a generous God. It's a wonder, it's a miracle, but God's abundance transcends the market economy. Three things happened to this bread in Exodus 16. First, everybody had enough. But because Israel had learned to believe in scarcity in Egypt, people started to hoard the bread. When they tried to bank it, to invest it, it turned sour and rotted, because you cannot store up God's generosity.

P: Finally, Moses said, "You know what we ought to do? We ought to have a Sabbath." Sabbath means that there's enough bread that we don't have to hustle every day of our lives. There's no record that Pharaoh ever took a day off. People who think their lives consist of struggling to get more and more can never slow down because they won't ever have enough.

S: We who are now one of the richest nations never feel that we have enough; we have to have more and more, and this insatiable desire destroys us. We must confess that the central problem of our lives is that we are torn apart by the conflict between our attraction to the good news of God's abundance and the power of our belief in scarcity -- a belief that makes us greedy and ignorant.

P: Sabbath, it seems, is also a justice issue. This rest is a justice issue because we need an economy in which people can make a living wage, so that no one needs to work every day of the week to make ends meet and provide for the needs of their households. We are mortals, and resting reminds us that we are creatures with bodily needs to stop and be refreshed. If we ignore Sabbath, just as we ignore needy and hungry people, all will not be right in our world.

Narr: Let us pray: Gracious God, give bread to those who hunger, and hunger for justice to us who have bread. Amen.

Reference: *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*, by Ched Myers, Washington DC, Sixth printing, December 2008.



## **“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”**

### **Drama/Dialogue: Week Two**

*Characters: Church-Mouse 1, Church-Mouse 2, Poor Man, Church Lady*

*Two different conversations take place in this scene: between the two church mice on one side of the stage, and between the man and woman on the other side. The mice can be seated on the floor or stand in a corner. The woman is seated behind a small table, with a second chair in front for the man. The woman has a box with food.*

Mouse 1: Today's our lucky day again! We may get something to eat in this church.

Mouse 2: What do you mean – the cheese in the mousetraps?

M1: Don't remind me! But today, I am sure, we'll get a free meal.

M2: Is it Sunday again? You are hoping for some crumbs from Holy Communion?

M1: No, today is Thursday. It's food pantry day.

M2: Oh, yes, that can be a real feast. Do you remember the loaf of bread that fell down on the floor and rolled under the kitchen counter? We had plenty to eat all week long.

M1: It's like the people here always say when they come on Sundays: Give us today our daily bread.

M2: Look, here comes the first customer.

Woman: *(to man entering the room)* Good morning. Please come in.

Man: Good morning. *(sits in chair opposite woman)*

M1: Oh, this one stinks.

M2: And look how dirty he is.

M1: Sometimes I wonder about people. Don't they know how important it is to keep yourself clean?

M2: Maybe he is just coming from work - must be a dirty job.

M1: I would be so embarrassed...

Man: They turned off my water last week. You know, I had to pay the light bill first. I have to keep the house heated for the kids.

Woman: (*embracing the man*) I'm sorry to hear that.

M1: (*disgusted*) Ewwwh!

Woman: How do you deal with that?

Man: I just have to let it go for now. Maybe I can get it straightened out when the next check comes in. Only God knows.

Woman: Did you try calling the water authority?

Man: Yeah, but I am too far behind they say. Nothing they can do.

Woman: I hope it works out for you. I can help you with some food for you and the kids.

M1: Did you hear...he has kids at home?

M2: I wonder how he'll feed them with just the box of food he's getting from here.

Man: Sometimes I worry about them, growing up like this.

Woman: I know. It's not much we can give you.

M1: Look at the nice chunk of cheese.

M2: I wish they would leave a jar of the peanut butter open for us.

Man: You have no idea, how much this means to us. It feels good to know, that somebody does care.

M1: They talk a lot about food in this church.

M2: They feed the people every Sunday in church, and give them to drink.

M1: Do you remember when the altar guild ladies brought in the communion bread that Saturday night?

M2: Do you think this is what they mean when they say: "Truly I tell you, just as you did to the least of these, you did it to me."

M1: But they don't just talk about food.

M2: These church people always try to feed others.

Woman: Oops, this bag of rice is ripped open.

M1: And there's our feast!

M2: I wish it would be food-pantry-day all week.

Man: Thank you. May God bless this church and your ministry.

Woman: I'm glad we could help.

M1: I love this church. They are caring people.

M2: And they also feed you well.



## **“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”**

### **Drama/Dialogue: Week Three**

*The names used (although only one is spoken) are ‘John’ and ‘Ted’, both pastors. For use in congregations, use the first names of local speakers. The tone of this piece is intended to be conversational throughout. Ted begins “onstage”, holding several pieces of paper, a Bible nearby within reach. John enters from “off stage”, looking for Ted.*

John: Ted? Ted, where are you?

Ted: Over here.

J: So, what are you doing?

T: I’m working on this sermon I said I’d do for the Hunger Task Force. Here, take a look at what I have so far. *(Hands some pages to J. Pause as J scans the pages.)* Well, what do you think?

J: Wow! I don’t know what to say.

T: *(a little surprised.)* Thanks!

J: No, I mean, WOW! This is awful.

T: Like I said, thanks. If you’re so smart, you do it. *(Pause)* What’s wrong with it?

J: Well, what it says isn’t bad. It’s just so ‘preachy.’

T: Well, hunger isn’t easy to write about. We’ve had the World Hunger Appeal for more than thirty years, and it doesn’t seem as if we’ve even made a dent in the problem. I know it’s a massive issue, even here at home. It’s just something that I’ve preached about for so long that I guess I’m a little ‘preached out.’ It’s hard to say something new about a problem we’ve been working at for so many years.

J: I know what you mean. Sometimes, I feel as if I’m all preached out about it, too. It just doesn’t go away. Famines here, floods there, earthquakes someplace else, starving children on the evening news, it just doesn’t end.

T: Well, you’re right about that. It doesn’t end. That’s what is making this *(indicates the pages)* so difficult. And it shouldn’t be. Here, read this. *(Hands J a Bible, and J reads Luke 9:12-17 aloud:)*

J: The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to [Jesus] and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside to lodge

and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.” But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy bread for all these people.” For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” They did so and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.” *(Pause, then)*

OK. It’s Luke’s story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. So?

T: Well, I want to get beyond the obvious. It’s more than just the only miracle mentioned in all four of the Gospels. And even if Luke doesn’t report it the way Matthew and Mark do, he doesn’t give it that whole ‘Bread of Life’ spin that John does, either. The story is almost stark, it’s blunt. That’s why it hits me so hard. And that’s where my struggle is. How do you read it?

J: Well, beyond the obvious, Luke shows Jesus involved in the needs of the people. As the day ends, he is concerned about the welfare and the well-being of the crowds. Look at the stats: Five thousand men, not counting the women and children. And all their resources are five loaves of bread and two fish. The real question is ‘How is that going to work?’ And the answer is: It does!

T: Anything else?

J: Let’s see. OK, it looks back to the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites after Moses brought them out of Egypt. God gave the people manna in the wilderness, Jesus gives them bread in a deserted place. God did this for forty years, Jesus did it once. In both, there was enough to eat, but in the Gospel there were leftovers—twelve baskets full of leftovers.

T: That’s good. More?

J: Hum-m-m... Well, it looks ahead to the Last Supper when Jesus institutes Communion. It even uses the same words. *(He reads aloud)* “And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.” He took, he looked, he blessed, he broke, he gave. Same words, same actions.

T: Don’t forget the road to Emmaus story. “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him...” Cleopas and his companion knew it was Jesus with them “in the breaking of the bread.” He took, he blessed, he broke, he gave. And once again, it’s as if we are to look to Jesus to supply all our needs—spiritually and physically.

J: Good for you. God fed the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years, and Jesus fed the crowds in a deserted place. Jesus fed the disciples at the Last Supper and a couple more

at Emmaus. Christ feeds us in Communion today, and ‘gives us a foretaste of the feast to come’ for tomorrow, and forever. Tell them God always comes through, even in the face of impossible circumstances, and “end of sermon.”

T: But it isn’t! At least not the way I understand it—or want to understand it. How does the gospel feed hungry people today if we’re willing to step back and let God do all the work? That’s not good news. That isn’t even helpful. It isn’t going to feed hungry people, and it isn’t going to do much to help them feel better about their problem. There is neither hope nor comfort for them because they can’t eat the words. It’s fine for spiritual feeding, for those of us with enough to eat. What about those who hunger, desperately hunger, for just enough food to make it through the day? This isn’t gospel for them, and these are the ones who need to be fed!

J: That’s good. The situation is overwhelming. What can we possibly do?

T: Hear me out. It’s not just about the poor and the hungry. It’s not about ‘them’ in the abstract. I don’t even think it’s about ‘them’ in the present, the here and now. I think it’s about us. The Gospels all have Jesus say essentially the same thing to the disciples. That’s the directive piece, the piece that hits me in my comfort zone and disturbs my well being. He tells the disciples, “You give them something to eat.” Yes, it’s about the poor and the hungry, but more than that, it’s about me; it’s about you, too. It’s about all of us, really, because it’s speaking to us: “You, and you, and YOU: give them something to eat.”

J: Well, that’s what we try to do. You said so yourself. For more than thirty years the church has raised tens of millions of dollars, and it hasn’t just gone to emergency food supplies, either. A lot of that money has gone to re-education: training people how to produce sustainable, disease-resistant food supplies, for instance. It supplies tools and seed money. We use it to dig wells so people have reliable sources of clean water. It does a lot, and it has been doing all of this for a long time. When we look at what we’ve done with what has been given to us, we can say that we’ve followed Jesus’ example: We have been feeding the multitudes in desolate places. And, we’ve been doing a pretty good job! We really are making a difference, you know.

T: I’m not disagreeing with that. But we’ve been doing it out of what we can afford and with what we are comfortable about giving away. But as we begin to worry more about our own bottom line, as this economy continues to pinch us, can we keep all this going? Some years ago, Bishop Hanson noted, “If we operate out of a mindset of scarcity, we become anxious, distrustful, and un-neighborly; but if we trust in the abundance of God’s grace and the gifts God has given to this community, we can move ahead and embrace change for the sake of mission.” He’s talking about what we need to do for the sake of the world. There’s always a connection. It’s almost a holy obligation.

J: A connection? (*pause*) OK, you’re thinking of things like the Malaria Initiative, aren’t you? (*Ted nods*) It’s almost like a biological chain reaction. Malaria strikes hardest against the poor and the malnourished. It kills millions of people every year, many of

them children. And the ones who don't die, live lives of bad health, stunted development, crushing poverty, and chronic malnutrition. It's an endless cycle that feeds on itself.

T: Exactly! The Malaria Initiative is about health and hunger. That's the connection. Remember last year's budget crisis here in Pennsylvania? The first cutbacks were in programs for senior citizens and food banks. The kind of help people really needed! Economic slumps always mean large budget cutbacks, and those reductions usually start with foreign aid budgets or local social outreach programs. The end result of those cuts hurts the poor the most. Not just the poor, but those who are desperately impoverished. Emergency aid, health care, and food relief—these are usually the first to go. And when that happens, we all pay for it. Not just those who are poor; it costs us, too. We can't fill the gap by ourselves, so the gap grows. Pretty soon, thirty years of work has to start all over again. Where does it end? (*J thinks about this, then responds*)

J: I don't know that it does. It seems to get worse all the time, and even more out of control. Still, I see what you want to get across. The disciples Jesus is talking to aren't just the twelve who are handing out the pieces of bread. WE'RE the disciples, too. God has given us so much. But it isn't just ours. Well, it is, but our abundance is only good for us as long as we share it with those in need. That's what the early church did. There was poverty and need in the world then. There still is, and it isn't going to go away tomorrow. Look at the early chapters of the Book of Acts, it's all there. The work to be done is ours to do. If we want to make a difference, we'll have to do it. Just as they did.

T: It's even earlier than that. Isaiah held out the promise to ancient Israel as well. Isaiah speaks for God and promises great abundance—food and drink for everyone, especially for those without money to pay for it. If those people today are going to be fed, we are the ones who will have to do it. God's final re-organization will come in the end times. For the time being, though, God has given us to each other, and we reflect the Lord's intention when we reach out our hands, not simply to take from God, but to take from God what has been given to us, and give it to those who come to us to be fed. That's really God's work, and our hands. If they can't come to us, we go to them, and soon enough, everybody eats! That's the miracle: there will always be enough, and plenty left over.

J: Yes! It's still the same Holy Spirit. In the first century, the Holy Spirit empowered the church to break social boundaries. Economic ones, too. The limits of gender and class and race were all erased, and the church grew. People were fed and human spirits were refreshed as the church gave out bread.

T: We're getting somewhere! God gave manna in the wilderness and brought his people safely to the Promised Land. Jesus fed the multitudes with enough and to spare. And Jesus gave bread and wine to the disciples at the Last Supper 'for the forgiveness of sins.' How revolutionary is that? We still do it, and for exactly the same reason: to show God at work in the world, showing that it really is God's work, our hands.

J: Slow down! You're starting to lose me.

T: At the altar we "do this for the remembrance of me." That's where we proclaim the Real Presence of Christ among us. But we also affirm God's economy of grace: a love that provides life-saving food for the world's well being. That's the call of the gospel: To take seriously God's ethic of equality. That's what "for you and for all people" means. No one is left out. Not even one. We are all the same before God; and what God gives to us is intended for everyone. That's the connection. Call it the fruits of faith if you want to; as long as we're busy with it and people are fed. It's our mission, and it's God's work for us to do.

J: OK. Get busy.

T: What?

J: Do it.

T: You do it.

*(J and T look at each other, then look out at the congregation and say together:)*

Both: You do it!

NOTE: The quotation by Bishop Hanson is taken from: *Faithful Yet Changing*, Minneapolis, Augsburg Books, 2002, p. 70.



## “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread” Drama/Dialogue: Week Four

*Carolyn, an older woman, and Earl, a young man, are sitting at a small table together. They are on break and each is drinking a cup of coffee. The genders and names of the characters can be changed as necessitated by the available cast, but the relative ages should remain the same: one older, the other younger. Regardless of the genders, the younger cast member should take the part of Earl.*

Carolyn: Mornin’ Earl.

Earl: Morning Carolyn. How’s it going?

C: Oh, it’s going.

E: *(Snorts a laugh)* Yeah, I know what you mean.  
*(He rubs the back of his head, like he’s got a bit of a headache)*  
I had a pretty busy weekend myself.

C: Oh yeah? Wha’d you do?

E: I had a very full social calendar.

C: *(Nods, understanding)* Ah. Gotcha.

E: Yeah, last night was pretty crazy. But not as crazy as Saturday night. Oh, man...

C: It got pretty wild, huh?

E: Oh, geez. Did it ever! I mean, it was out of control! But, uh... Don’t say anything to anyone, OK? I don’t wanna get caught violating my parole.

C: Oh, hey. No problem.

E: So what’d you do this weekend?

C: Well, Saturday I was down here.

E: You mean this place is open on weekends, too?

C: Sure. People who’re hungry are hungry all the time, not just when it’s convenient for us.

E: Yeah, I guess there’s that. So why’d you come down here on the weekend, though? You’re here almost every day. Don’t you have stuff you gotta do?

C: Well, sure. But I’m only here in the morning. I’ve got plenty of time for myself when I’m home in the afternoon. Besides it’s like I said, people are hungry every day.

E: I don’t get why you spend so much time down here. Don’t you get tired of it? I mean, as soon as I’ve got my community service hours done, I’m out of here.

C: And there's no other reason why you decided to come here instead of going someplace else?

E: Not really. Well, they had a spot open and they could take me right away. And I figure it had to be better than picking up garbage or something like that. Plus, I don't know. I kinda like to cook and stuff like that. So, anyway, you still didn't tell me what you did this weekend.

C: Well, like I said, I came down here on Saturday morning. Then I went out for dinner and a movie with some of my friends from card club. We saw that new one with..., oh... what's her name?

E: *(teasing)* I don't know, I wasn't the one watching the movie!

C: *(good naturedly)* I will ignore that, Mr. Smarty. Anyway, then on Sunday I went to church and Sunday school.

E: *(laughs)* You're dumb.

C: *(feigning indignance)* I beg your pardon!

E: You're going to school. On Sunday!! Geez, you're down here every morning. You deserve to take Sunday off. *(rubs head absently)* I know I sure needed it.

C: Well, for your information, Mr. Smarty, if I didn't go to Sunday school and church I never would have found out about this place. And you wouldn't have someone nice like me to spend so much time with!

E: They told you about this place in church? I don't believe it. All they ever want from you in church is money.

C: How do you know that? Do you go to church somewhere?

E: *(laughs)* No.

C: Well, if you don't go to church, how do you know that all they want is your money?

E: Well, that's what my dad used to say. He didn't go either. So how come they were talking about this place in church?

C: It was last year, during World Hunger month.

E: What's that?

C: Every year we take a whole month and devote it to World Hunger.

E: You mean, like, Africa and places like that?

C: Sure – Africa, Asia. But also right here at home. We take a whole month to study hunger and what causes it in the world and here at home. Last year they had Sue, the director of this place, come in and talk to our Sunday School class about local hunger issues. She talked about the challenges involved in running a soup kitchen like this that feeds 200 people a day.

E: Two hundred!?

C: Sure, we do the kids' breakfast in the morning and then we do lunch. You've been here for a couple of weeks now, didn't you notice that it was that many?

E: I guess I never really bothered with counting.

C: I bet you didn't lose count of all the beer you drank over the weekend.

E: *(slightly defensive)* What's that supposed to mean?

C: *(regretting the turn in the conversation)* Oh...never mind.

E: *(a little more indignant)* No, c'mon now. You took a shot at me. What did you mean by that?

C: *(sighs)* Look, Earl. You're a nice guy. And you're not dumb, either.

E: *(somewhat mollified)* Thank you.

C: But you need to realize that there's more to this world than where the next party's at. *(pauses)*

E: And?

C: And, well... life isn't just about having a good time.

E: Yeah... that's what the judge said, too.

C: I know you've heard it before and you're probably not going to like hearing it again,...

E: *(interrupting)* but...

C: ...but she's right!

E: *(begins "shutting down", becomes a bit distant, defensive)* Don't get started on that junk, OK? I've heard enough of it from my parents and I don't need to hear it from you, too! OK?!

C: *(looking a little hurt)* I'm...I'm sorry, Earl.

E: *(softening a bit)* I get tired of everyone telling me how worthless I am.

C: Well, of course you're not worthless. That's exactly my point! You're basically a good person, like most other folks are. And you're smart, too. But you've got to learn to think beyond the end of your own nose.

E: What's that supposed to mean?

C: Well, like I said before: there's more to life than the getting ready for the next party.

E: What? You want me to go to church?

C: Well, it wouldn't hurt.

E: *(rolls his eyes)*

C: Seriously, why don't you come to church with me?

E: Why should I do that?

C: Well, 'cause I think you'd get something out of it, that's why! Look you were wondering why I come down here, right? Well, my church is a big part of the reason I come down here. Like I said, it's how I learned about this place.

E: So?

C: I learned a lot more, too. You were surprised that this kitchen serves 200 people a day. Did you know that there are two other kitchens in the area, too, that do the same kind of thing that we do here?

E: Really?

C: Really. Like I said: the hungry are everywhere, including right here.

E: Yeah, but I don't have money for church.

C: Earl, the church isn't just interested in money. I'm not gonna tell you that we don't need money.

E: *(triumphantly)* Hah! See, I told you!

C: *(persevering)* Earl, my church isn't interested in making money. It's not a business. But I'm not going to lie to you. They do need money, but only so they have the resources they need to help other people.

E: How's that?

C: For example, it's World Hunger month again. So just this past Sunday we were talking about how widespread it is. Over one billion people are hungry. And every day about 16,000 children die from hunger or the problems that hunger can cause.

E: *(whistles)* Dang!

C: Dang, is right. But I can't go over to Africa and work there like I do here. So we take up a special collection for World Hunger. And at the end of the month we send it to the national church so that they can use the money we send to help feed people and to help educate them all over the world.

E: What good is that gonna do them?

C: What?

E: Education.

C: Well, there's a saying: "If you give a person a fish, that person will eat for one day. If you teach a person to fish, that person will eat for a lifetime".

E: Yeah, I've heard that before. I guess that makes sense.

C: One of the reasons I go to church is so that I can learn about things like this. Because if I never bother to learn about things like hunger and poverty, I'll never know what I can do to help.

E: You mean like finding out about this place and coming to work here.

C: Right! If we want to end hunger than we need to learn about what we can do to fight it and to prevent it. And we need to teach people who are hungry, too. So that they can help themselves.

E: And your church does all that?

C: Well, not just our little church all by itself. But together with all the other Lutheran churches we do some pretty amazing stuff.

E: I think my mom was Lutheran.

C: So?

E: Well, I guess it's sorta in my blood.

C: *(trying not to get too excited)* So you'll come with me?

E: Well, you said this world hunger thing is just for a month, right?

C: Mm-hmm.

E: OK. I'll give it a shot. But just for a month first. I'm not making any promises.

C: OK. *(smiling)* Just remember that this month has five Sundays.

E: C'mon, old lady. We gotta get back to work.

C: *(crumples up her napkin and throws it at him)* I'll give you "old lady"!

*(They both laugh as they get up and leave.)*

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## **“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”**

### **Drama/Dialogue: Week Five**

*Characters: Mary, a new food pantry volunteer; Sue, a veteran food pantry volunteer; Tom, a veteran food pantry client; Jeff, a friend/co-worker of Tom*

*Note: In Scene 2, when characters are “thinking aloud”, an alternative is for other actors to speak the characters’ “thoughts” off-stage, while Mary and Tom are silent onstage.*

*Props: three chairs, magazines, table (see arrangement for Scene 2)*

### **Scene 1**

*A phone conversation. Mary and Sue, with (pantomimed) phones to their ears, may stand or sit on opposite sides of the stage, or Sue’s voice might appear from off-stage while Mary stands or sits center stage.*

Mary: Hi, Sue. My name is Mary. I just moved here from out of state, and I used to volunteer with the food pantry at my old church. The pastor told me you’re the person I should call to get involved here.

Sue: Wonderful! Are you free on Wednesday night?

Mary: Yes, I am.

Sue: Great! I’ll see you at 6:30. That way I can give you a quick orientation and get you on the regular schedule before our guests arrive. See you then!

### **Scene 2**

*At the food pantry welcome desk—perhaps a table with some papers on it and at least one chair behind it. Two more chairs are set up as the waiting area, a couple of magazines on one chair.*

Sue: *(entering and gesturing around as she concludes the tour, followed by Mary)* ...Well, that’s pretty much everything. Do you have any questions?

Mary: I don’t have any questions about logistics. But is there anything I should know about our guests?

Sue: What do you mean?

Mary: Well, I guess I’m curious why they’re here. I mean, I know that everyone’s circumstances are a bit different, but are there any particular issues that most of them are facing?

Sue: Oh, I don’t know – I’ve never asked.

Mary: Really? Then how do you know how to help them?

Sue: Well, I know they need food, otherwise they wouldn’t be here. I’ve just always felt like they don’t want to talk about their situations. Especially at church. I don’t want to embarrass them.

Mary: Oh, I see... *(thoughtful pause)* I guess that makes sense.

*(Mary sits behind the desk/table. Sue exits to work “in the back”. After she leaves, Tom enters and comes up to the desk.)*

Mary: Hi, I’m Mary.

Tom: Hi Mary, I’m Tom.

Mary: Nice to meet you Tom. Just fill out this form and then I’ll take it back and return with your bag.

Tom: Thanks.

Mary: *(Mary peeks in "the back" to check on things)* Sorry, they're just a little short on volunteers back there today. And we've been swamped all night! It will just be about five minutes.

*(Tom flips through a magazine)*

Mary: *(speaks aloud, but as if thinking to herself, perhaps while doodling)* This is so awkward! I really want to talk to Tom. But maybe Sue is right. Maybe he doesn't want to share his story with a total stranger. *(Mary continues to sit, looking thoughtful and worried.)*

Tom: *(still flipping through magazine, speaks aloud, but as if thinking to himself)* I hate coming here. It's embarrassing enough just to walk in – but they never talk, except about the weather – and this lady can't even manage that!

Mary: *(still "thinking" aloud to herself)* This is stupid. You've done this hundreds of times before; just say something!

Mary: *(to Tom)* Some weather, huh?

Tom: Yup.

*(Awkward silence)*

Mary: *(still "thinking aloud" to herself)* Well, that didn't work. Better just to jump in, I guess.

Mary: *(to Tom)* Tom?

Tom: Yeah?

Mary: I'm new, so forgive me. Do you come here often?

Tom: More than I'd like.

Mary: Sure. *(pause)* So why exactly do you come? *(Tom looks puzzled.)* I mean, what are some of the reasons you can't afford all the food you need? I'd like to be informed so that I can be a good advocate.

Tom: *(with more energy, but still a bit reserved)* Well...housing for one. Rent plus utilities is about half our income. And we can't live where it's cheaper, because we wouldn't be able to take public transportation to work.

Mary: Thanks for sharing with me, Tom. Unfortunately that makes a lot of sense. I bet it's a pretty common problem. But hopefully we can do something about it...someday.

Tom: What do you mean?

Mary: Well...Advocacy!

Tom: What's Advocacy?

Mary: Advocacy is a way that we can use our citizenship to voice concern for our neighbors in need. As a Christian, it's very important to me that I do everything I can to help my neighbors, just as my neighbors have helped and will help me. That's why I volunteer here. But volunteering isn't going to solve big problems; it's only going to help you today, not in the long term. Plus, if I talk to my elected officials about the problem of affordable housing, I can do more than just help a few families: I can help hundreds or thousands of families!

Tom: Advocacy...wow, that's really great. Thanks for doing that for me.

Mary: It's my pleasure, the least I can do. But, you know, it's something you can do for yourself, as well. I mean, it's something we can do together.

Tom: Oh, I don't know about that – I think I'll leave the important meetings up to you.

Mary: It's really not as intimidating as you might think. In fact, it can be a lot of fun!

Sue: *(entering from behind and interrupting conversation)* Hello, Sir! Here's your bag.

Tom: Thank you. Thank you so much. I have to be going...but I hope I see you again soon, Mary.

Mary: I'll be here. Sunday mornings too!

Tom: Thanks – take care! (*exits*)

Sue: Wow – he sure looks different!

Mary: What do you mean?

Sue: Well...he's one of our regulars – the most solemn-looking of the bunch. I've never seen him smile like that before.

Mary: Oh, well, he wasn't like that for most of the time...only when I started to talk about Advocacy.

Sue: Right, I heard a little bit of that. I guess it's good that you gave him some hope...but you don't really believe we can have an impact on big problems like affordable housing, do you?

Mary: Of course I do!

Sue: Really?

Mary: Absolutely! My former church was very involved in advocacy, and we got to celebrate several big victories over the years. We did “paper plate campaigns” about hunger so that our efforts would be noticed more by officials – and many of the pictures, stories and poems were quite moving. One year, this resulted in several million dollars being added to food and nutrition line items of the state budget.

Sue: That's incredible! But that was because you did something unusual, right? I mean most of the time they don't really read your letters.

Mary: Sure they do! Especially if they know you. And on the state level...it's not so hard to start a relationship. Just call them up and ask for a meeting.

Sue: I had no idea...!

Mary: Most people don't. And then when they first hear about it they get excited...but it fades as soon as their first efforts aren't as successful as they would have liked. Sometimes we didn't get millions – but even in the years where we were able to keep the funding from getting cut, we were excited. You definitely have to learn to celebrate even the smallest successes to be a good advocate.

Sue: But over time, I bet they add up.

Mary: Exactly!

Sue: Well, we should really finish cleaning up and head home. But would you be willing to come and share your advocacy experiences with our social ministry committee? I'd love for us to work together on advocacy as a group.

Mary: I'd be delighted! In fact, I'm relieved. Advocacy is so much more rewarding (and effective!) when there's a group of people working together. I was afraid that moving might mean dropping advocacy as a major part of my discipleship, and I really get a lot out of it. It's kind of a spiritual practice for me.

Sue: Fascinating! I would never have thought. I can't wait to hear more! (*Sue and Mary exit*)

### Scene 3

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*New location: workplace of Tom and Jeff — may indicate this by rearranging chairs/table, or by centering on opposite side of stage than previous scene. Jeff is already onstage when Tom enters.*

Jeff: Hey, Tom! What's gotten into you? Is that a smile I see?

Tom: Come on now, have I really been that bad lately?

Jeff: I'm sorry, you're right. Considering everything you've been going through...you're a peach. What's up?

Tom: Well...I went to the food pantry at St. Matthew's last night.

Jeff: Whoa...this is gonna be some story if you're smiling after that. You hate that place!

Tom: Yeah, I know. But...I met someone different last night. She actually talked to me. And not just about the weather. She really wanted to know my story and wanted me to share it with others, even politicians.

Jeff: Wow...that's a switch.

Tom: Yeah, I think I've been too hard on those volunteers. They must all be nice people, just a little shy and not sure how to act around people who are different. And now, with Mary, things may really change there. I'm actually looking forward to going back.

Jeff: That's great! Well, I hope this new attitude of yours can last for another two weeks. Let me know how I can help.

Tom: Thanks, Jeff. Actually...I think I want to visit them on Sunday morning for worship. Would you come with me?

Jeff: Would be happy to! We'll figure out the details on our lunch break.

Tom: Great...talk to you then! *(both exit)*

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# “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread” Children’s Sermons

## Week 1

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Exodus 16:4

*I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow instruction or not.*

Props needed: white cotton balls

Leader: Think of a time when you were really, really hungry and thirsty.

*Kid’s response*

Leader: *(If children don’t respond)* ...maybe it was on a long car ride

*Kids’ response*

Leader: God’s chosen people were taking a long, walking trip in a hot, dry desert. There was no food or water. They asked God for help and God gave them bread from heaven. Can you shut your eyes and pretend it is night time and you are sleeping? [Scatter cotton balls on the floor.] Wake up! Do you see anything on the floor?

*Kids’ response*

Leader: This is not bread from heaven, but let’s pretend that it is. You cannot eat this because this is not bread. Let’s pretend it is bread from heaven called “manna,” and pick some up.

*[Kids gather. Some children will have more than others. Point this out to them.]*

Leader: Remember God said to only gather what you would need for a whole day. \_\_\_\_\_ has more manna than \_\_\_\_\_. What do you think we should do about this?

*Kids’ response [Direct them toward sharing.]*

Leader: In our world today God does provide food for all the world’s children. However, some of us have more than others. What do you think God would want us to do about that?

*Kids’ response*

Leader: Dear God, help us to know that you do provide, and help us to share your blessings with others. Amen.

## Week 2

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Psalm 8:6-8

*You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea.*

Props needed: stuffed animals (fish, birds, cow, sheep if possible)

2 animal dishes

1 box children’s band-aids

Leader: What do we have here (*referring to the stuffed animals*)?

*Kids' response*

Leader: God made all these animals just like God made us. Can these animals feed themselves? Can they drive to the doctor if they get sick? Can the fish clean up the oil or the garbage we dump in their water?

*Kids' respond to each question*

Leader: What do you think God wants us to do for these animals?

*Kids' response [feed, put band-aids on hurts, etc. Let children act this out]*

Leader: Dear God, bless these children for taking good care of your animals, fish, and birds. Thank you for all these wonderful creatures you have created and help us to always remember to take care of them. Amen.

## Week 3

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Luke 9:13b, 14a, 16, 17

*We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people. For there were about five thousand men...And taking the five loaves and the two fish, [Jesus] looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.*

Props needed: “bread” slices cut out of beige foam pieces  
“fish” cut out of cardstock or purchased  
basket to hold props

Leader: Have you ever really been hungry?

*Kids' response*

Leader: What is your favorite pie?

*Kids' response*

Leader: What if there were five people in your family and only one piece of pie left?

*Kids' response*

Leader: It would be hard to divide it up, wouldn't it? Jesus had a crowd of five thousand people. Do you know how many people that is?

*Kids' response*

Leader: So imagine (*hold up and count five bread slices and two fish*) that this is all Jesus had to feed the five thousand people

*Kids' response*

Leader: But Jesus is God's Son, and unlike magic that magicians do, God can do miracles. Do you think God could make enough food for everyone?

*Kids' response*

Leader: Let's look in this basket! WOW! Can we go out and share this food with the congregation?

*Kids take fish and bread throughout the congregation, return with empty basket*

Leader: Dear God, thank you for providing food for all people that are hungry. Please make us your helpers to share and take this food to them. Amen.

## Week 4

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Deuteronomy 6:5-6

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commending you today in your heart.*

Props needed: heart stickers (large, if possible)

Leader: Who do you know that loves you?

*Kids' response [parents, teachers, pastor, etc.]*

Leader: Do they ever teach you how to do the right things?

*Kids' response*

Leader: Jesus loved us enough to give his life on the cross for us. But did you know that Jesus loved us enough to teach us about God and how God wants us to behave? *[Pass out heart stickers to the children]* Place these hearts where you will see them and remember that Jesus, the one who saved us, is also our teacher. Where do you think you will put your stickers to remember them?

*Kids' response*

Leader: Dear God, we thank you for the love and teaching of Jesus. Help us to love all others and to remember that this is what Jesus wants us to do. Amen.

## Week 5

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Leviticus 25:14

*When you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not cheat one another.*

Props needed: globe

Leader: Do you know what it means to cheat and steal?

*Kids' response [direct them to cheating while playing games, etc]*

Leader: God does not want us to cheat or steal. This is a globe, a round map of our world. Does anyone know where we live?

*Kids' response*

Leader: *[show them where we live]* We live right here. Look at all the other places in this big world. We are only a little part of God's big globe. There are places in our country and other countries where children have to work instead of play and learn. There are places where children are hungry and sick and cold. Do you think that is right?

*Kids' response*

Leader: When we take more from this world than we need (like too many toys or too much food) we are stealing from those other children. God wants us to share and to always remember the other children in the world.

*Kids' response*

Leader: *(optional) Sing "Jesus loves the little children/ all the children of the world/ red and yellow, black and white/ they are precious in his sight/ Jesus loves the little children of the world."*

Leader: Dear God, we thank you for the world and all the children. Help us remember and pray for them always. Amen.

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# “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

## Take-Home Family Devotions

Use these take-home family devotions to extend the worship/learning into participants' homes. Copy and cut apart the devotions for each week, and distribute them at the end of a children's sermon in worship, or put out copies in the middle of tables as you gather for a mid-week meal, or print in the Sunday bulletin announcements if you're using these materials for worship.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Week in Lent



**Supplies:** Chore list and Pillow

**Devotion:** Gather a list of chores together that need to be done. Make a copy of the list for each member of the family. Figure out who is going to do what chores. Now put the lists under your pillows and take a nap. When you wake up, then do chores. Sabbath rest is strange because it calls us to put aside our lists of things to do for a time and then to pick them back up once we are rested. Though it probably felt strange to make a list and then not do it how did it feel to take up the list once you were rested? In all work we do

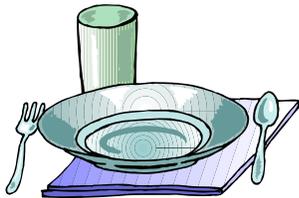
we must recognize our need to be prepared for the task including getting enough rest.

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:1-3

**Song:** ELW #561 Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, give us the strength to leave our labors and our plans, and to rest in you, the true source of our sustaining. Amen*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Lent



**Supplies:** Mealtime jobs list. Small plates and glasses that will need to be filled often.

**Devotion:** Make a list of all the things that need to be done during a meal—setting the table, filling water glasses, serving food, etc. Take turns being the person designated to do these tasks. For instance, one person in the family will keep everyone's glasses full and another will serve food to anyone that needs more. You will literally take turns seeing when people are hungry and when people are thirsty and doing something about that. Opening one's eyes to the needs of one's family is the first step to opening

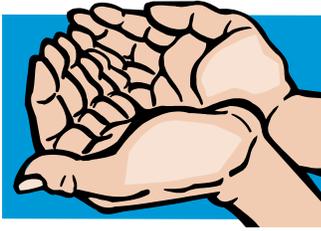
one's eyes to the needs of the world.

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:35

**Song:** ELW #659 Will You Let Me be Your Servant

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, help us to see those who are in need in the world and guide us in how to best care for them. Amen*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Lent



**Supplies:** Seasonal recipes

**Devotion:** One way we can make a difference in the world every day is by fasting from foods that are not in season. The average piece of food travels 2000 miles before winding up on your plate. By eating food that is not grown halfway around the world this average and the fuel needed for transportation can be lowered. This week try to eat food that is made from ingredients that are currently in season (i.e. things that would be available to you without modern transportation) In late March, some thoughts for ingredients are: Frozen Vegetables, Onions, Root Vegetables,

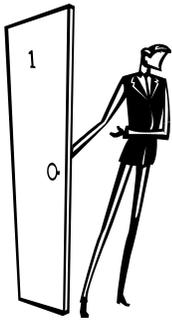
Cabbage, Ham, Roasts from a local butcher.

**Scripture:** Psalm 145:15-16

**Song:** ELW #484 refrain You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, you open your hand to provide for our every need. Help us to be satisfied with what you provide. Amen*

### 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent



**Supplies:** Colored chalk (or permanent marker, if you are bold). Small Catechism or Bible

**Devotion:** Write the Ten Commandments on the door frame of your house, inside and out. Recite them individually or as a family every time you leave the house or come home this week.

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:1-9

**Song:** ELW #813 Faith of Our Fathers

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, help us to know your law, but most of all, help us to live your law. Amen*

### 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent

**Supplies:** Monopoly money

**Devotion:** At the beginning of the week give everyone an equal amount of Monopoly money. During the week, whenever someone does something nice for you, you must pay them for their services. When someone does something mean to you, they must pay you for your suffering. At the end of the week, count up your money, then distribute it evenly so everyone has the same amount again. Congratulations! You've just experienced "Jubilee." How did it feel to get money if you had very little? How did it feel to give money back if you had a lot? Did this game help you to see how your behavior affects other people?

**Scripture:** Leviticus 25:8-17

**Song:** LBW #487 Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, help us to be generous with all that you have given us so we may help others and be a blessing in their lives. Amen*

