

# Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger

14-16 October

Liturgy: Sharing food with the Hungry – Isaiah 58: 6-12

RON  
ABDOU



Artwork by Ronald Abdou



Mennonite  
World Conference

**Integral:** actalliance



World Vision



World Council  
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Organization of African Instituted Churches  
Organisation des Eglises d'Institution Africaine  
Association of African Instituted Churches, Registered Office: P.O. Box 21730-00100, Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: (+254-20) 387030/387031/387032/387033/387034/387035/387036/387037/387038/387039/387040/387041/387042/387043/387044/387045/387046/387047/387048/387049/387050/387051/387052/387053/387054/387055/387056/387057/387058/387059/387060/387061/387062/387063/387064/387065/387066/387067/387068/387069/387070/387071/387072/387073/387074/387075/387076/387077/387078/387079/387080/387081/387082/387083/387084/387085/387086/387087/387088/387089/387090/387091/387092/387093/387094/387095/387096/387097/387098/387099/387100/387101/387102/387103/387104/387105/387106/387107/387108/387109/387110/387111/387112/387113/387114/387115/387116/387117/387118/387119/387120/387121/387122/387123/387124/387125/387126/387127/387128/387129/387130/387131/387132/387133/387134/387135/387136/387137/387138/387139/387140/387141/387142/387143/387144/387145/387146/387147/387148/387149/387150/387151/387152/387153/387154/387155/387156/387157/387158/387159/387160/387161/387162/387163/387164/387165/387166/387167/387168/387169/387170/387171/387172/387173/387174/387175/387176/387177/387178/387179/387180/387181/387182/387183/387184/387185/387186/387187/387188/387189/387190/387191/387192/387193/387194/387195/387196/387197/387198/387199/387200/387201/387202/387203/387204/387205/387206/387207/387208/387209/387210/387211/387212/387213/387214/387215/387216/387217/387218/387219/387220/387221/387222/387223/387224/387225/387226/387227/387228/387229/387230/387231/387232/387233/387234/387235/387236/387237/387238/387239/387240/387241/387242/387243/387244/387245/387246/387247/387248/387249/387250/387251/387252/387253/387254/387255/387256/387257/387258/387259/387260/387261/387262/387263/387264/387265/387266/387267/387268/387269/387270/387271/387272/387273/387274/387275/387276/387277/387278/387279/387280/387281/387282/387283/387284/387285/387286/387287/387288/387289/387290/387291/387292/387293/387294/387295/387296/387297/387298/387299/387300/387301/387302/387303/387304/387305/387306/387307/387308/387309/387310/387311/387312/387313/387314/387315/387316/387317/387318/387319/387320/387321/387322/387323/387324/387325/387326/387327/387328/387329/387330/387331/387332/387333/387334/387335/387336/387337/387338/387339/387340/387341/387342/387343/387344/387345/387346/387347/387348/387349/387350/387351/387352/387353/387354/387355/387356/387357/387358/387359/387360/387361/387362/387363/387364/387365/387366/387367/387368/387369/387370/387371/387372/387373/387374/387375/387376/387377/387378/387379/387380/387381/387382/387383/387384/387385/387386/387387/387388/387389/387390/387391/387392/387393/387394/387395/387396/387397/387398/387399/387400/387401/387402/387403/387404/387405/387406/387407/387408/387409/387410/387411/387412/387413/387414/387415/387416/387417/387418/387419/387420/387421/387422/387423/387424/387425/387426/387427/387428/387429/387430/387431/387432/387433/387434/387435/387436/387437/387438/387439/387440/387441/387442/387443/387444/387445/387446/387447/387448/387449/387450/387451/387452/387453/387454/387455/387456/387457/387458/387459/387460/387461/387462/387463/387464/387465/387466/387467/387468/387469/387470/387471/387472/387473/387474/387475/387476/387477/387478/387479/387480/387481/387482/387483/387484/387485/387486/387487/387488/387489/387490/387491/387492/387493/387494/387495/387496/387497/387498/387499/387500/387501/387502/387503/387504/387505/387506/387507/387508/387509/387510/387511/387512/387513/387514/387515/387516/387517/387518/387519/387520/387521/387522/387523/387524/387525/387526/387527/387528/387529/387530/387531/387532/387533/387534/387535/387536/387537/387538/387539/387540/387541/387542/387543/387544/387545/387546/387547/387548/387549/387550/387551/387552/387553/387554/387555/387556/387557/387558/387559/387560/387561/387562/387563/387564/387565/387566/387567/387568/387569/387570/387571/387572/387573/387574/387575/387576/387577/387578/387579/387580/387581/387582/387583/387584/387585/387586/387587/387588/387589/387590/387591/387592/387593/387594/387595/387596/387597/387598/387599/387600/387601/387602/387603/387604/387605/387606/387607/387608/387609/387610/387611/387612/387613/387614/387615/387616/387617/387618/387619/387620/387621/387622/387623/387624/387625/387626/387627/387628/387629/387630/387631/387632/387633/387634/387635/387636/387637/387638/387639/387640/387641/387642/387643/387644/387645/387646/387647/387648/387649/387650/387651/387652/387653/387654/387655/387656/387657/387658/387659/387660/387661/387662/387663/387664/387665/387666/387667/387668/387669/387670/387671/387672/387673/387674/387675/387676/387677/387678/387679/387680/387681/387682/387683/387684/387685/387686/387687/387688/387689/387690/387691/387692/387693/387694/387695/387696/387697/387698/387699/387700/387701/387702/387703/387704/387705/387706/387707/387708/387709/387710/387711/387712/387713/387714/387715/387716/387717/387718/387719/387720/387721/387722/387723/387724/387725/387726/387727/387728/387729/387730/387731/387732/387733/387734/387735/387736/387737/387738/387739/387740/387741/387742/387743/38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## Introduction:

Conflict; an uneven global economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; the effects of climate change; high inflation; as well as the rising cost of food, fuel, and fertiliser are driving a polycrisis that is pushing tens of millions of girls, boys, and their families into extreme hunger.

The number of people affected by acute food insecurity has nearly doubled over the past three years, from 135 million people across 55 countries and territories in 2019 to a record 258 million in 58 countries in 2022 – even more than last year’s mid-year projection that, without urgent action, 222 million across 53 countries and territories could face ‘crisis’ (IPC 3) conditions or worse.

In the face of dire statistics, we know that [hunger has a name...](#)

- Seven-month-old Hamdi weighed only 8.8 pounds in June when she arrived at a nutrition clinic in Baidoa, Somalia. Health workers found her to have severe acute malnutrition, exacerbated by acute watery diarrhea and measles. Drought in Somalia is not only impacting access to food.
- Ten year old Peter in Kenya, whose family’s food supply has been impacted by drought and climate change.
- 1-year old Nadia in Afghanistan, displaced and experiencing severe malnutrition.

Nadia, Hamdi and Peter found help and support...but the situation globally remains a significant challenge. And hunger is in every neighbourhood and community.

These realities are true in a world where there is enough to feed everyone....and so we pray for justice, for hearts to act and serve and for systems to change to take steps to end hunger.

# Opening Prayer:

L: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

L: The risen Christ is with us.

C: **Praise the Lord!**

L: Triune God, we gather in Jesus name. We hear your promise:

*Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—*

*Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear (Isaiah 58: 7-8)*

Inspire us to serve you as we serve one another and the world.

To you be the glory, now and forever.

C: **Amen**

## Hymns & Music

Options for sung worship are available in the accompanying resource.



## Hunger today

These key messages can be read as one piece or can be shared by multiple people, as is most appropriate for your context.



**Nearly 50 million people – 21 million children – are steps away from starvation.**



**The global hunger crisis is being driven by conflict, climate change, the economic impacts of COVID-19** and now rising food and fuel prices that have left people even further behind. Without urgent action, the world will fail to achieve its goal of eradicating hunger by 2030.



**Conflict and violence** are the greatest barrier to achieving zero hunger, climate change is a 'threat multiplier', and COVID-19's economic impacts continue to reverberate.



**The war in Ukraine is also creating food and agriculture supply chain challenges**, driving up food, fertiliser, and fuel prices that are supercharging the hunger crisis for the world's most vulnerable people.



**Children are not just starving but are being starved to death due to human inaction.** The deaths of these children are preventable if we act now. But time is running out. If the world stands by and does this too little too late, children and their families will be forced to make dangerous survival choices that will have lasting harmful consequences for girls and boys, including preventable death.



**Humanitarian funding and access to those who are starving are vital if lives are to be saved.**

## Videos and Stories:

- **Learn:** [How is climate change affecting farmers? | MCC](#)
- **Listen:** [Children Speak Up About the Hunger Crisis](#)
- **Learn:** [These are the warning signs of a global food shortage - WFP](#)
- **Did you know:** [An Estimated four people are dying every minute from hunger](#)
- **Watch:** [The Unexpected Consequences of Climate Change](#)
- **Read:** [Would you take food away from a hungry child to feed a starving one?](#) by Meghan Stanley

## Prayer of Confession

L: When we ignore the beauty of creation,

**C: how terrible for us.**

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

**C: how terrible for us.**

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

**C: how terrible for us.**

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

**C: how terrible for us.**

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

**C: how terrible for us.**

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

### Silence

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

Send your spirit to renew the whole creation

As we proclaim the everlasting love of your Son.

**C: Amen**

Source: Spiritual Life Resources of the 10<sup>th</sup> WCC Assembly in Busan, South Korea

## Hymns & Music

*Options for sung worship are available in the accompanying resource.*



## Scriptures

*Please use a selection of the following scripture verses to aid your reflection on our theme. These can be read aloud or used for personal meditation or small group discussion.*

- Isaiah 58:6-12
- Matthew 25:35-45
- 1 John 3:17-18
- Hebrews 13:1-3
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-10
- James 2:15-16
- Luke 10: 25-37

# Reflections

## FASTING

### **True fasting as actions towards justice – by Dr. Manoj Kurian**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SHARING

### Enough to Share by Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

There are shared meals one will never forget. Years ago, I visited churches in Zimbabwe. It was a difficult time with incredibly high inflation and political turmoil with violence. We passed by a church building under construction in the suburbs of Harare. It was a working day. Spontaneously people came when they saw our cars. We sang and prayed together. We were about to leave, but someone asked us to stay. Women went to their homes and came back soon with chicken, rice, and salad. We sat down and shared a meal together. What a sign of love and welcome. I was blessed by the gracious gift of food, hospitality, and care. It was like light rising in the darkness. I was reminded that God's kin-dom is not a future dream. It becomes real in the middle of the injustices and hardships we are facing, such as increase of hunger, wars, armed conflicts, climate change, most affecting those who only cause few carbon emissions, etc. God's kin-dom is real, today, when we share food with one another, explore new ways to grow wheat and avegetables, see Christ in the stranger and become Gods beloved community.

#### Follow up questions:

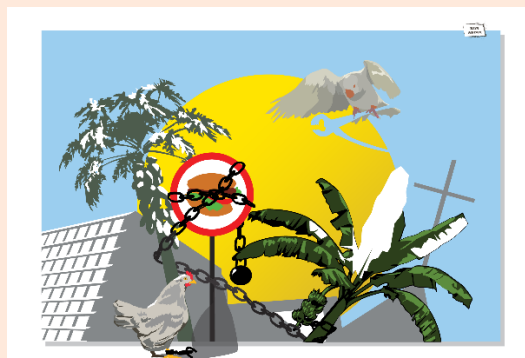
- Do you remember meals that touched and even changed your life?
- With whom could you share food? Perhaps you wish to reach out to people with whom you never met for a meal?
- Look at your life and at your community in the light of God's promises in Isaiah 58,6-12. Any thoughts on how these promises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



## WHOLENESS

### Part of the whole by Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

What a colourful image. Many details to explore. Signs of pain and signs of hope. Look at the chain: Will it be taken to shackle people? Or are shackles broken and forever put aside? Look the sun. It stands for the source of life, for light, a sign of hope after a dark night of fear and pain. Yet the power of the sun is also hurting as we face terrible damages with global warming. The artist Ronald Abdou from South Africa illustrated Isaiah 58: 6-12. God speaks through the prophet and puts choices before us. If we opt for a blessed life, our night will become like daylight, we will become like a well-watered garden, fruits will nourish us and flowers will please our eyes. We will be called repairers of broken walls. What a bright future! The future starts today if we opt for justice, compassion, love, and togetherness. Basically, it is about realizing that I am part of the whole creation. Look at the illustration of Ronald Abdou: I depend on the sun, that shines without me paying for it. I need the trees to produce oxygen and to provide fruits. The bird takes seeds of corn and vegetables from one place to the other. People whom I don't know built the house I live in. I am because there is this vital net of interactions in God's creation and within humankind. I – together with others of good will - can honor God by sharing food with the hungry, by providing shelter for the poor wanderer, by setting the oppressed free and by seeing God's image in the face of the other. This is the dawn of a bright new day. I wish to draw myself into the picture, come to the cross in repentance and thanksgiving and realize how I am interwoven with God's creation. I will invite others to make the choice towards a blessed life. By sharing what we received and by protecting God's creation we will live into God's shalom.



Artwork by Ronald Abdou

#### Artist statement:

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

## Hymns & Music

Options for sung worship are available in the accompanying resource.







## Examples of Action

Here are some examples of organisations working to end hunger and improve nutrition.

### ZOA Climate Smart Agriculture

Video	Climate Smart Agriculture in Iraq
<b>Description</b>	The GIZ-funded 'Knowledge transfer for Agribusiness Innovation' project assists the development of the private sector in the growing Iraqi market. The project will facilitate linkages between international companies and opportunities within the Iraqi market for investment, trade, and knowledge exchange. Through creation of business opportunities, the project aims to promote employment and growth in Iraqi agribusiness.

### Community meals with Rev. Joshua – The Leprosy Mission

Video	<a href="#">LINK</a>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Leprosy is enough of an issue on its own. Even though there is a cure, for too long leprosy has continued to rob people of family, jobs, and dignity. Stigma and discrimination mean people with leprosy hide their symptoms for as long as possible, living in fear of what will happen to them. If leprosy is not caught early, a sufferer can lose feeling in hands and feet, and also go blind. Daily tasks become fraught with danger, hands get burned while cooking and walking on sharp stones can injure feet. Injuries often ulcerate, which can then need amputation. Leprosy disrupts and disables lives.</p> <p>Rev. Joshua knows that good nutrition is hugely important, because it enables people to have stronger bodies to help fight leprosy. Once a month, he invites local people living with the effects of leprosy to a community meal. To make sure everyone is involved, the children go into the plantation gardens on a 'treasure hunt' to find ingredients to add to the evening meal. Our vision Once all the ingredients are gathered, Rev Joshua cooks a feast with the help of the community, giving them ideas on how to use the ingredients well. As well as providing a feast, he teaches them how to grow and cook nutritious food. A team also performs a dynamic drama to teach the community about nutrition, leprosy and stigma.</p>

## Good nutrition is essential for all children and adolescents, including migrants – World Vision

Video	<a href="#">LINK</a>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The current food crisis, aggravated by war, climate change and the effects of the pandemic have raised the price of food. This affects vulnerable populations, such as children and adolescents to a greater degree and generates diseases such as malnutrition, obesity and anemia.</p> <p>The panorama is even more complicated for Venezuelan migrants and refugees, who flee their country due to violence, lack of food, medicines and essential services and encounter these same difficulties in the host countries. Many Venezuelan families have adopted at least one strategy to cope with these difficulties and thus pay for their food by borrowing money or reducing expenses in other areas, such as health and education.</p> <p>For this reason, World Vision supports migrant families by providing CASH to help them cover their food expenses and meet their immediate needs.</p>

## Jitahidi (do your best) we do farming – Organisation of African Instituted Churches

Video	<a href="#">LINK (option to download)</a>
<b>Transcript in English</b>	<p>In our group which is called Jitahidi we do farming. We started the group in 1999 with 30 members. Mainly we do farming of indigenous vegetables and bananas. This place where we stand is called Oasis street kitchen garden. We farm on a small piece of land but the production is high.</p> <p>On this farm, we dug a hole 3 feet going down, then on the floor we laid a thick nylon paper and then put stones over it. Here we put this pipe. This pipe is connected to another pipe which reaches at this point. This other pipe down here has been perforated with small holes. So we pour water here through this pipe.</p> <p>This one here is red “ndeleva”. This “ndeleva” is very good and nutritious. It adds blood in the body. If you have a sick person who suffers from insufficient blood, it is advisable to use this “ndeleva”. It is also good for Women who have lost much blood through giving birth. You can also feed your dairy cow or dairy goat with it.</p> <p>Members of Jitahidi are qualified farmers who have been well trained in vegetables and banana farming as well as other crops. As a group we have set aside a week in every month where we go round visiting our members. Also we have set aside time in which we conduct visits in the community, schools, churches and groups teaching them how to do vegetable farming and about nutrition. We teach about agri-nutrition and encourage people to eat indigenous vegetables”</p>

# Invitation to action

Good food is one of those things that we can all relate to. We will more than likely have a favourite meal – perhaps something our mum makes better than anyone else, or we may have our own speciality that we like to serve guests. Perhaps there is a specific food that reminds us of our childhood or something that reminds us of our home country. Without a doubt food brings us together – across time and space – often around a table or some other shared space. In preparing and eating a meal we take an action. As well as focusing our stomachs, we also focus our minds and hearts.

Over this Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger, we pray for and commend the excellent work of those individuals, congregations and organisations that work tirelessly to end hunger and improve nutrition. We also seek to reflect on our opportunities to be more mindful of what is on our plates and to take action accordingly.

As we step out of this place of prayer and back into our daily routines, going into a week full of breakfasts, lunches and dinners, may we encourage and challenge one another to take these small actions:

- 1) Prepare and eat a meal where as many as the ingredients as possible have been produced within 100km of your home. During the meal spend time giving thanks for all those involved in getting the food and meal to your table.
- 2) Prepare a simple nutritious meal where there is sufficient for everyone to have enough. Eat the meal in silence and mindfully with others and reflect on this once the meal has been completed
- 3) During a meal, speak of all those involved in growing, producing and manufacturing the ingredients for your meal. What do you know of how they are treated and paid? Spend time giving thanks for them
- 4) Share a meal with people you wouldn't usually eat with. Get to know your guests and learn more about their lives- their joys and challenges. Learn from their experiences. When the disciples invited Jesus on the road to Emmaus and shared the meal, their hearts and eyes were opened to see God. Reflect on ways in which you can get involved in ensuring just and equitable access to food for all people

See the full [Action Guide here](#)





# Prayers

In this section are a number of prayers, each of which can be used as appropriate for the context.

## Video prayer

### Savannah Kagiri- Kenya - WEA Converge Youth Movement/NxtMove

Video	<a href="#">LINK</a>
<b>Description</b>	This prayer was recorded at a meeting of young Christian leaders from across Africa, who are figuring out indigenous NextGen missional strategies for their nations. For each of them a preferred future is focused on a gospel which transforms lives to transform communities, and this means Africa thrives both spiritually and materially. Thriving in one sphere without the other is not a true expression of the gospel of the Kingdom. As such food poverty suggests a deficit in the impact of the gospel on the continent of Africa.

### Mother to Mother support group Prayer – Organisation of African Instituted Churches

Video	<a href="#">LINK</a> (option to download)
<b>Description</b>	<p>Praying and Acting Against Hunger is more than a Campaign led by Christian organizations. It is an active expression of faith brought into action in many local Christian communities around the globe. Here is one example of many: Kenyan women in a congregation which belongs to the Organization of Africa Instituted Churches (OAIIC) created a Mother to Mother support group. They supported one another by buying Galla goats for tending for each member and they worked together communally to start a demonstration farm. The farm is located in Skul Sakale in the West Pokot County which is a semi-arid area in North Rift Kenya. Resource persons and lead farmers trained by the OAIIC Livelihood Program work with small scale farmers to alleviate hunger.</p> <p>Here is the prayer of one of the Mother to Mother support group members. She speaks Kiswahili, the translation to English reads as such:</p>
<b>Transcript in English</b>	<p>“All powerful father, creator of heaven and earth; Jehovah, we have come before you; look at these women, God, who have come before you; they have made every effort to do the work of farming in order to fight hunger in our community and our country Kenya and the world. Jehovah we pray that you help us and give us strength; give them and open all ways for them so that they get food in their houses. We eradicate hunger in our country Kenya; we eradicate hunger in our county of west Pokot. We stand as women and as a group and pray that you manifest to us. Jehovah give us, and open for us doors of prosperity in our lives. Jehovah we pray that you give us strength so that we eradicate hunger. Hunger as a calamity has destroyed our country Kenya; hunger as a calamity has even destroyed our county of west Pokot. Jehovah we pray that you give women love and prominence to help them seek wealth and get enough food in their houses. Jehovah, I pray and believe in the name of Jesus Christ...”</p>

## Congregational prayer

*This prayer can be read aloud either by a leader or together as a congregation.*

Lord God

We come together today and acknowledge that you are our Creator, Sustainer and Judge. Help us to live in your world, your way and please forgive us when we all short of your best. Forgive us when we have not shared what we have for fear of not having enough. Forgive us for not relying on you for our daily bread. Forgive us when we have not loved our neighbour. Help us, Lord God to commit to a right and better relationship with food. In the bounty of your good creation, we know that there is enough for all.

Today, in your grace and love, we commit to the following ten principles to guide us:

1. We shall give thanks for the food we eat.
2. We shall eat food grown as close as possible to where we live.
3. We shall strive for all people to have knowledge about and access to affordable food, nutritious food.
4. We shall eat mindfully and in moderation.
5. We shall not waste food.
6. We shall be grateful to those who grow and prepare food for our tables.
7. We shall support fair wages for farmworkers, farmers and food workers.
8. We shall reduce the environmental damage of land, water and air from food production and the food system.
9. We shall protect the biodiversity of seeds, soils, ecosystems and the cultures of food producers.
10. We shall rejoice and share the sacred gift of food with all.

### **Help us Lord God**

To share what we have knowing that there is more enough to go around.

### **Help us Lord God**

To rely on you for our daily bread each new day.

### **Help us Lord God**

To know that loving our neighbour is part of loving you - our good Father in heaven who knows how to give good gifts to His children.

### **Help us, Lord God**

To invite your perfect love to overshadow us and cast away all our fears

We say again, in the bounty of your good creation, we know that there is enough for all.  
In the name of Jesus we pray,

**Amen**

Read the [10 Commandments of Food](#)

## A prayer for children and families

### *Weekend of Prayer and Action against Hunger (Alan Charter)*

Loving God,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Read the [child friendly version of 10 commandments for food](#)

## Hymns & Music

*Options for sung worship are available in the accompanying resource.*



## Benediction

Go forth and share food with the hungry.  
Go forth and provide the wanderer a shelter.  
God will guide you always  
and you will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.

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