# Food and Hunger

## World Hunger Sunday

*“An alternative worship and learning experience”*

*(Adapted from resources in ELCA World Hunger Toolkit for education.*

*See ELCA World Hunger/Resources/toolkits/ hunger and food.)*

### The Gift of Food

Pre-service music

(As worshippers enter the worship area, they each take a fruit or vegetable provided at the door. A huge cornucopia could be constructed to hold the items. Include as large a variety as manageable—apples, bananas, pears, grapes, kiwi, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes, avocadoes, peaches, plums, tangerines, squash, potatoes, yams, turnips, carrots, parsnip, rutabaga, tomato(?) peppers, zucchini, cucumber, lettuce, cabbage, corn, green beans, peas, kale, celery, onions, melon, cheese(?), butter (?), rice, lentils, beans, quinoa, radishes, and other fresh foods)

**Welcome and Announcements:**

Explain today’s worship service as a celebration of the gift of food, as a look at how everyone can eat, as a challenge to work with God so that no one goes hungry.

**Gathering Hymn** ELW 679 “For the Fruit of all Creation”

**Invocation:** In the name of the one who created us and all living things, of the one who redeemed us and the world in great love, of the one who calls us to give thanks and praise with our voices and lives

**Amen.**

**Prayer:** God, our Creator, **you have ordered seedtime and harvest, sunshine and rain, give to ll who work the land fair compensation for the work of their hands. Grant that the people of this nation and every nation may give thanks to you for food and drink, and all that sustains life. May all carefully use the land and water from which these good things come, and may all honor the laborers who produce them, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Am**en.

**Food as God’s wonderful gift**

Possible instructions for the leader:

READ: When was the last time you marveled at the gift of food? How often do you think about the miracle—of seeds, earth, sunshine, and water? How often do you remember all the labor that went into your food? Food is an amazing gift.

1. Have people take a good look at their food. It’s said that some people eat to live and others live to eat. Many of us aren’t very mindful of the food we eat. We want to notice food today. Look at the food in your hands. Note its color, shape, size, weight, perfection or lack of it. Is there something unique about this particular food? Talk to your neighbor about this food.
2. In what way is this food a gift to you? Do you enjoy eating this food? If you eat it what does it do to your body? What does it taste like—sweet, sour, bland, sharp? Is it crunchy, smooth, stringy, soft, hard? Does it need to be cooked before it can be eaten? Do you eat this food often? Do you like this food? (Share with a neighbor in the pews.)
3. Where does this food come from? What natural processed were involved in getting this food to your table? Can it be grown locally? Is it imported? If imported how far does it need to come to get to your table? Who is involved in producing this food and getting it to your table?
4. Marvel together at the gift of food. Not only does it sustain us, but we can enjoy it in so many ways. It’s not just a matter of inputs and outputs, but we are built

with the capacity to enjoy and experience this act of sustenance. What a gift!

**A Reading from Genesis 1:29-31**

**A Prayer** Blessed are you, O Lord God, **for you give us food to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad, through Jesus Christ out Lord. Amen.**

***Leader:*** *We’ve seen that food is a gift, but we ask what keeps some from enjoying that gift? What is there about our world and it’s systems that makes feeding those who are hungry complicated and complex. Food is a gift that comes with problems.*

### The Problem of food

**Hymn -** ELW 512 - “Lord Let My Heart to Good Soil”

**Prayer** Abundant God, **we give you thanks for the fruitful earth, which produces what is needed for life. Bless those who work in the fields; grant favorable weather to all engaged in agriculture; and help us to ensure that all people share the fruits of the earth, rejoicing in your goodness; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

The Problem of Food

*Leader: We have experienced the wonderful gift of food. We live in a world where food is produced in abundance, where we produce enough food for everyone to have their nutritional needs met. Yet 1.02 billion people in the world are hungry. WE ask why? What is there about our food production and distribution that contributes to hunger? Talk to your neighbor about some of the causes of hunger in the world.*

*The leader might take a variety of answers from the congregation*

*The leader could then present these items from the resource “Food and Hunger”. If using PowerPoint these could be displayed next to each other. The leader may want to focus attention on 2 or 3 of the issues below. (An option would be to have several people present these so that different voices are heard.)*

***Food production and distribution***

*High fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS), a sweetener made from corn, was invented in the late 60’s and in the late 70’s began to be widely used in food production. Bu the mid 80’s it could be found in nearly every processed food. The vast majority of our consumption of H FCS is from soda.*

***Correlated problem***

*Since the early 80’s obesity, Type II diabetes, and other chronic food related illnesses have been steadily increasing in the United States. Type II diabetes was formerly called “adult onset diabetes” because it was found in adults, but now it is common in children.*

***Food production and distribution***

*Food production and distribution accounts for one-fifth of the oil use in the United States. Oil is used to produce fertilizer, pesticides and packaging; it is also used for planting, harvesting, shipping and cooling. Food travels an average 1500 miles from field to plate.*

***Correlated problem***

*Human act6ivity, specifically through the burning of fossil fuels, exacerbates climate change. Climate change affects rainfall patterns, which in turn limits the ability of farmers, especially subsistence farmers to grow food.*

***Food production and distribution***

*According to the USDA, in general, only farms that have net sales of more than $250,000 are profitable. In other words, a smalller4 farm that has net sales under $250,000 is generally not financially sustainable. Farms with net sales greater than $500,000 are the most profitable. The largest farms also receive the largest subsidies from the government.*

***Correlated problem***

*More and more small farms are being consolidated into larger farms. Evidence suggests that counties that receive the most farm support (that is, counties with the largest farms) are stagnating economically and losing population.*

***Food production and distribution***

*Poorer areas of the United States, both rural and urban, are less likely to have access to affordable and nutritious food. Those who are poor are more likely to live in a “food desert” where their only option for food is a convenience store or fast food restaurant.*

***Correlated Problem***

*Obesity and other health problems related to diet such as Type II Diabetes are more likely in poorer communities.*

***Food production and distribution***

*In the United States we spend only about 10% of our income on food, the lowest percentage in the world. Those who are poorest and most vulnerable around the world may spend as much as 80 or 90 percent of their income on food.*

***Correlated Problem***

*Too many people all along the food production and distribution chain (such as farm workers, meat packers, cooks, clerks, and others) are barely paid a livable wage.*

***Food production and distribution***

*The United States is the largest exporter of corn in the world. Due to U.S. subsidies to farmers, many countries (such as Mexico) find it cheaper to import corn from the United States than to purchase it from a local farmer.*

***Correlated Problem***

*Farmers in many countries around the world cannot sell their crops for a profit. They end up without a livable income. Many lose their land. Displaced, they often migrate looking for work so that they can feed themselves and their families.*

***Food production and distribution***

*In the United States, food is often centrally processed and then shipped across the country and across the world.*

***Correlated Problem***

*If one batch of food is contaminated with bacteria like Salmonella or E. Coli 0157:H7 It is quickly and widely distributed across the U.S. and into the rest of the world. This can lead to massive outbreaks of illness and even death. Large quantities of contaminated food must be recalled and disposed of.*

A Reading: Amos 8:4-6

Prayer: Gracious God, **reminded of low paid workers and food deserts within lands of plenty, we confess that we have fed ourselves and forgotten those without access to food. Make us aware of the opportunities you give us to improve the ways we produce and distribute food. Amen.**

### The Challenge of Food

Hymn - ELW 689 - “Praise and Thanksgiving”

The Challenge of Food

Video from World Hunger Appeal (See ELCA World Hunger web page for access or choose from the DVD available at the synod office.

World Hunger Impact

*From Alaska to Alabama, from Chile to China, your gifts are hard at work helping our neighbors near and far break the cycle of hunger and poverty. Your generous giving makes it possible for ELCA World Hunger to be present throughout the United States and throughout the world. In 2016, we are supporting:*

* *349 projects in 46 U.S. states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico*
* *62 countries, including the United States*

*From health clinics to microloans, food pantries to soup kitchens, advocacy to community organizing, your gifts are supporting meaningful solutions that get at the root causes of hunger. This year, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger totaling $21 million supported innovative and effective projects around the world, including:*

* *community organizing in Alaska’s Mat-Su valley;*
* *Central City Lutheran Mission’s emergency men’s shelter in San Bernadino, California;*
* *Inter Parish Ministry’s choice food pantries in Batavia and Newtown, Ohio;*
* *primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe;*
* *sustainable farming in China; and over 600 other projects in the areas of relief, education, advocacy and sustainable development!*

List of ways we can participate in alleviating hunger and act responsibly

with our food.

A Reading from Matthew 14:13-21, “you give them something to eat”

Prayer: Abundant God, **we give you thanks for the fruitful earth, which produces what is needed for life. Bless those who work in the fields; grant favorable weather to all engaged in agriculture; and us to ensure that all people share the benefits of the earth, rejoicing in your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### The Gift of God’s Food

Offering including a special offering for World Hunger Appeal

Offering Hymn - ELW 479 - “We come to the Hungry Feast”

Eucharistic Prayer

Holy God, you feed your hungry people always

Providing food in the garden

Food for the Passover meal

Manna and quail in the desert

Bread and fish for the 5000

Through your loving goodness

Revealed in your Son Jesus,

Who in the night in which he was betrayed

Took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and Eat: this is my body, given for you

Do this for the remembrance of me.

After supper also, he took the cup

Gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink,

Saying: this cup is the new covenant in my blood,

Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Bless us your poor and impoverished people

With your presence in this bread and wine,

That we receive the power to be hope for the hungry,

As we use the abundance of gifts you place in our hands.

Hear us for the sake of him who meets us now and who taught us to pray

Our Father…

Communion:

Post Communion prayer

O God, **we give you thanks that you have set before us this feast, the body and blood of your Son. By your Spirit strengthen us to serve all in need and to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

**Benediction**

Almighty God, creator of all things and constant provider, savior of the world and lord of all, and giver of life and hope and love, bless you now and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn - ELW 538 - “The Lord Now Sends Us Forth

Dismissal: Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked, honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Thanks be to God.**

*Portions of this liturgy are adapted from* Evangelical Lutheran Worship *and ELCA World Hunger Education Toolkit* Food and Hunger *and in resources from* Bread for the World Institute.