



**US HUNGER
LENTEN
DEVOTIONAL**



**INDIANA KENTUCKY SYNOD
HUNGER TASK FORCE**

Thanks for choosing to learn and reflect on hunger in the United States. There are four possibilities each day. Feel free to choose as many as you feel comfortable.

FEBRUARY 18-ASH WEDNESDAY

Hunger Fact: The USDA uses the following classification of hunger. Food insecurity: These households” were uncertain of having or unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all their members...” This applied to about 13% or 18 million households.

Low food security: These households “obtained enough food to avoid substantially disrupting their eating patterns or reducing food intake...” This applies to about 8% or 11 million households.

Very low food security: In these households “normal eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake was reduced at times during the year...” This applies to about 5% or over 6 million households.

Bible Verse: Isaiah 58:5-8

Prayer: Bread of life, bread of Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. Feed those who are hungry. - Bread for the World

Action Item: Reflect on the above hunger fact: How might you cope if your normal eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake was reduced? Who in your household would suffer the most?



FEBRUARY 19

Hunger Fact: “... there is an inverse relation between energy density (MJ/kg) and energy cost (\$/MJ), such that energy-dense foods composed of refined grains, added sugars, or fats may represent the lowest-cost option to the consumer. “

Drewnowski, Adam, and Stephen E. Specter. "Poverty and obesity: the role of energy density and energy costs." The American journal of clinical nutrition 79.1 (2004): 6-16.

Bible Verse: Matthew 14:13-20

Prayer: Sharing the loaves and fishes, You gave us an image of solidarity with the hungry, O Lord. Sharing yourself in the bread and wine, You called all to the table, O Lord. Give me the hunger to be a part of the feeding and the healing of this world. Nourish me with your Grace, so I may work with joy to serve your children. Open my eyes and my heart to recognize those in poverty and increase my awareness of the structures and systems that need to be changed so we may all break bread together. In your name we pray for the end of hunger.

Amen. - Education for Justice

Action Item: If you gave up something related to food for Lent, find an opportunity each week to share that with someone else. For example, if you gave up sweets, could you bake cookies to share with neighbors one week, with strangers at the store the next, with your local food pantry another week, etc.?

FEBRUARY 20

Hunger Fact: 1 in 5 children are food insecure in the US.

Bible Verse: Mark 10:13-16

Prayer: Lord, it's hard to see children suffer, especially from hunger. We ask you to give them daily bread today and throughout the coming months. Provide the food they need to grow and thrive. We look to you, O God, our strength.- *World Vision, Pray to end the West Africa hunger crisis*

Action Item: Find a local “little free pantry” or “Blessing Box” and commit to adding one item each week until Easter.

FEBRUARY 21

Hunger Fact: 16 million-Number of kids in US living in households without consistent access to adequate food.- *ELCA World Hunger Backpacks Guide*

Bible Verse: Psalm 32:6-7

Prayer: Let us pray for the poor, hungry, and neglected all over the world, that their cries for daily bread may inspire works of compassion and mercy among those to whom much has been given. - National Catholic Rural Life Conference

Action Item: Visit a little free pantry or Blessing Box daily for a week. Observe which items are taken quickly and which ones are not taken. Consider how you can help.

FEBRUARY 22

First Sunday in Lent. Reflect on the Gospel reading today. Matthew 4:1-11

FEBRUARY 23

Hunger Fact: For many in our community food prices are too high and income is too low; they face food insecurity, if not real hunger. Supplemental Nutrition Food Assistance Program, SNAP, (food stamps) is a government program that is to help families fill the gap. Benefits are calculated by how far a household's 30% of income falls short of what they call the Thrifty Food Plan, TFP.

Bible Verse: Matthew 5:6

Prayer: Let us pray for an end to the waste and desecration of God's creation, for access to the fruits of creation to be shared equally among all people, and for communities and nations to find sustenance in the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us. - National Catholic Rural Life Conference

Action Item: In the spirit of Lent, where we are called to pray, fast, giving alms and engage in acts of justice and solidarity, we invite you to participate in the following spiritual exercise:

Live on the Thrifty Food Plan for one week. The link below shows the TFP broken down by age and gender. (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnpp/low-moderate-liberal-food-plans-2007>)

Day 1: Establish your TFP for the week, make a menu, and grocery list.

Day 2-6: Have daily conversations/reflections over or after supper about the experience. Perhaps keep a journal.

Day 7: Summarize the experience, put in words what it has meant to you, has it changed your perspective? Have you saved any grocery money this week? What could you do with this "extra" money if there is any? Which food-related charities might you support? Which food related justice work might you support?

FEBRUARY 24

Hunger Fact: "...poverty and food insecurity are associated with lower food expenditures, low fruit and vegetable consumption, and lower-quality diets." Calories/energy in the form of fresh vegetables or fruit are vastly more expensive than calories in processed foods.

Drewnowski, Adam, and Stephen E. Specter. "Poverty and obesity: the role of energy density and energy costs." The American journal of clinical nutrition 79.1 (2004): 6-16.

Bible Verse: Matthew 25:35

Prayer: Let us pray for all nations and people who already enjoy the abundance of creation and the blessings of prosperity, that their hearts may be lifted up to the needs of the poor and afflicted, and partnerships between rich and poor for the reconciliation of the world may flourish and grow. - *National Catholic Rural Life Conference*

Action Item: Day 2 (Thrifty Food Plan Challenge) Have a conversation/reflection over or after supper about the experience or write in your journal.



HUNGER

FEBRUARY 25

Hunger Fact: School attendance increases with sufficient nutrition by 1.5 days per year. - *ELCA World Hunger Backpack Guide*

Bible Verse: Proverbs 14:31

Prayer: God our sustainer, we ask you to pour your powerful Spirit into all who are empty this day: Fill the hearts of persons who are troubled. Fill the minds of men and women who are confused. Fill the stomachs of your children who are hungry. Fill the souls of people who are feeling lost. Fill the lives of all who need you, but do not know you. May your Spirit fill us all to overflowing, dear Lord, and may we be inspired to share our abundance with others, so that there will be no more empty hearts and minds, stomachs and souls. We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ, who fills lives with your endless grace. Amen.

Action Item: Day 3 (Thrifty Food Plan Challenge) Have a conversation/reflection over or after supper about the experience. Write in your journal if you are keeping one.

FEBRUARY 26

Hunger Fact: Test score in school increase with sufficient nutrition by 17.5%-*ELCA World Hunger's Backpack guide*

Bible Verse: James 2:15-17

Prayer: Most merciful God of all creation, we come to Your throne of grace with praise and thanks for all the rich blessings you have bestowed so freely upon all your children. We worship You and offer unending thanksgiving for Your love, Your justice and Your sustaining mercy.

We ask for special mercy this day for those crushed by poverty and those oppressed by forces beyond their control. We pray that those in the shadow of starvation may see the light of your presence in the form of life-sustaining food and that the hungry everywhere might be fed until they are filled.

Open our hearts, Lord, that we may see through Your eyes. Help us to love our brothers and sisters even as You love us. And let Your love, Your mercy and Your grace flow through us as we strive to meet the need of the least of these among us. In a world so richly blessed there are none that should lack daily bread. Our prayer is that You would empower us to do whatever needs to be done to see that Your gifts are shared with all our family. Amen.

Action Item: Day 4 (Thrifty Food Plan Challenge) Have a conversation/reflection over or after supper about the experience or write in your journal.

FEBRUARY 27

Hunger Fact: Gaps are needs that are not currently being met. These are niches that no current service provider is filling. Gaps can be geographic, logistic or material.

Geographic gaps are related to the “where” of community services. These are locations that don’t currently have services meeting the residents’ needs. For example, in communities with limited transportation, services need to be near transit centers or close enough to residences to allow neighbors easy access. – ELCA World Hunger’s Feeding Ministry Guide

Bible Verse: Luke 1:46-55

Prayer: Most gracious God, who gives the fruits of the earth for the benefit of all your creatures, we give thanks to you for abundant harvests and plentiful production on this earth. We pray for those in our land who are denied these gifts, and seek your forgiveness for our complicity in their want. We pray for those whose voices are not heard and for those who do not hear. Forgive us when our choices are selfish ones, and forgive us especially when we do not choose to raise our own voice against the pain of our brothers and sisters who suffer needless want. Most of all, O God, we give you thanks for the revelation of your love in Jesus Christ, who came that everyone might have abundant life. Amen.

Action Item: Day 5 (Thrifty Food Plan Challenge) Have a conversation/reflection over or after supper about the experience or write in your journal.

FEBRUARY 28

Hunger Fact: 21 million children rely on free and reduced school lunches. - *ELCA World Hunger Backpacks Guide*

Bible Verse: Luke 6:30-32

Prayer: Let us pray for the farmers with limited or marginal land throughout the world, for those who lack access to water and other resources, and for the light of research and support services to shine in the lives of all God's people. - *National Catholic Rural Life Conference*

Action Item: Day 6 (Thrifty Food Plan Challenge) Have a conversation/reflection over or after supper about the experience or write in your journal.

MARCH 1

Second Sunday in Lent-Reflect on Gospel lesson today. John 3:1-17

MARCH 2

Hunger Fact: Gaps are needs that are not currently being met. These are niches that no current service provider is filling. Gaps can be geographic, logistic or material.

Material gaps are related to the “what” and “who” of community services. They include specific needs that aren’t met, such as providing feminine hygiene products or baby and infant items. This might include meeting the needs of local diets by ensuring that a pantry or feeding ministry provides kosher or halal items or food products that are part of the native diets of immigrant communities. This can also include unmet relational needs such as companionship .- *ELCA World Hunger’s Feeding Ministry Guide*

Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 15:11

Prayer: O God, you entrusted to us the fruits of all creation so that we might care for the earth and be nourished with its bounty. You sent us your Son to share our very flesh and blood and to teach us your Law of Love. Through His death and resurrection, we have been formed into one human family. Jesus showed great concern for those who had no food even transforming five loaves and two fish into a banquet that served five thousand and many more.

We come before you, O God, conscious of our faults and failures, but full of hope to share food with all members in this global family. Through your wisdom, inspire leaders of government and of business, as well as all the world’s citizens, to find just, and charitable solutions to end hunger by assuring that all people enjoy the right to food. Thus we pray, O God, that when we present ourselves for divine judgment, we can proclaim ourselves as “One Human Family” with “Food for All”. Amen. - *Caritas*

Action Item: Day 7 (Thrifty Food Challenge) Summarize your experience. Has it changed your perspective? Did you save any grocery money? What could you do with this "extra" money? Which food-related charities or justice work might you support?

MARCH 3

Hunger Fact: Food insecurity is often linked to one or multiple factors, which can be related to household income, expenses, access to affordable health care, the surrounding social and physical environment, and barriers to opportunity. - *Feed America*

Bible Verse: Psalm 121:1-2

Prayer: O God, our Creator, through our elected leaders and our government, you sustain all you have made. We pray especially for people who are seeking election to political offices in our country. Grant them integrity and wisdom to focus on matters that strengthen our government and provide help and opportunity to people in need. Give us courage to challenge candidates to address issues of hunger and poverty. As we prepare to cast our votes, may we be guided by a vision of love, justice and mercy. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen. - *Bread for the World*

Action Item: Do some research to discover if there is a “Backpack Buddies” program in your area to provide weekend meals for children who receive free or reduced lunch at school. If you cannot find one, what local organization might be able to start one? (<https://resources.elca.org/elca-world-hunger/backpack-buddies-how-to-guide/>)

MARCH 4

Hunger Fact: Food insecurity impacts communities in every county, parish and congressional district in the U.S. People from all backgrounds and demographics experience food insecurity, but disparities exist. – *Feeding America*

Bible Verse: Proverbs 19:17

Prayer: Almighty God, it is difficult to see people suffer from hunger. We pray for You to give the hungry daily bread today (Matthew 6:11) and end their persistent hunger. Provide the food children need to grow and thrive. Pour out Your grace on hungry families, especially parents straining to feed their children despite dwindling resources. Amen.

Action Item: Sign up to receive the ELCA World Hunger newsletter so you can stay informed and inspired about what our church is doing.

(https://community.elca.org/elca-email-subscriptions?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&_ga=2.230012506.753746074.1770134640-425827479.1765475249)

MARCH 5

Hunger Fact: 85% of counties with the highest food insecurity are rural.
- *Feed America*

Bible Verse: Philippians 2:4

Prayer: O Creator of all living things: We are all hungry in a world full of abundance. The possibilities of food for bodies and souls overflow in this beautiful world. We ask for the grace to see the abundance of our world and enough awareness to acknowledge our sins of greed and fear.

Give us openness of soul and courageous, willing hearts to be with our sisters and brothers who are hungry and in pain. We ask for your intercession on behalf of every person hungry for earthly food and hungry for the taste of the Spirit of God. We give thanks that we can be part of that intercession.

This world is blessed with enough food of the earth for every person to eat and be satisfied. We all can feed on the bread of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, as God makes a home in our hearts.

We come together in awe and wonder at the Creator who loves us so much that we are invited and urged to be co-creators with God in the care of our brothers and sisters.

In the name of the tender Mother-Father of all people who hears every cry, Amen. - *Ann Case*

Action Item: Follow ELCA Advocacy on Facebook

MARCH 6

Hunger Fact: We might think that “food desert” areas without easy access to full-service grocery stores are a problem; we might believe that food deserts cause poor or unhealthy nutrition. But this might not be the complete story.

When a full-service grocery store enters a food desert, we might expect households to buy higher nutritional quality. That is not so. The paper below shows that a health index of purchased food is basically unaffected by the entry of a full service grocery store. Why might this be so?

Upon entry of a full service grocery store, households substitute away from more distant groceries to the now closer grocery without changing what they purchase. This might save time, but will not provide for better nutrition.

The price of a calorie is so much higher in nutritious foods like fresh vegetables than in non-nutritious foods.

Allcott, Hunt, Rebecca Diamond, and Jean-Pierre Dubé. The geography of poverty and nutrition: Food deserts and food choices across the United States. No. w24094. Cambridge, MA, USA:: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2017.

Bible Verse: Proverbs 22:9

Prayer: Lord Jesus you fed the hungry, you shared your bread with all. Your people hunger now, and we are called to share your bread. May rains fall upon the dry and broken earth and quench your people’s thirst, so seeds grow tall and flourish, producing a bountiful harvest. May we share the blessings you give us and bring comfort to those in need. May we show love through our actions so all have enough to eat. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Action Item: Reflection: What do you think is the best way to ensure better nutrition for more people? What could your church do to bring this about?

MARCH 7

Hunger Fact: The following factors are strongly associated with a high incidence of very low food security: Ø Having a female head of household, no spouse present Ø Having a male head of household, no spouse present. This effect is smaller than for female heads. Ø Being Black or Hispanic Ø Household income below the poverty line

Bible Verse: Luke 3:11

Prayer: God of peace, we struggle to understand all that is happening in this world. But your scripture says to trust that you are with us and with all who face the chaos of nations raging, kingdoms tottering. Comfort all who are afraid. Comfort all who are hungry. Comfort all who grieve. Comfort all who long for your peace. We pray in the name of the one whose love knows no bounds. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Action Item: Reflection: Reflect on reasons why the female head of household effect is bigger than the male head of household effect.

MARCH 8

Third Sunday in Lent Reflect on the Gospel lesson John 4:5-42

MARCH 9

Hunger Fact: Nearly 9 out of 10 high food insecurity counties are in the South, indicating regional disparities. - *Feeding America*

Bible Verse: 1 John 3:17-18

Prayer: O God, I pray for all those around the world who struggle with hunger and suffer from malnutrition. Grant them strength and courage as they work to create a better life for themselves and their communities. May conflicts cease, crops flourish, and good governance grow. In the name of Jesus, who is the Bread of Life for the world. Amen.

Action Item: Look up a local food pantry online and find their list of current needs.

MARCH 10

Hunger Fact: The number of people facing extreme hunger: Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC: 23 million, Afghanistan: 12 million, Yemen: 17 million, Syria: 12 million, The Sahel: 13 million - *World Food Program*

Bible Verse: Luke 4:18-19

Prayer: Lord God, I pray for our President, the members of Congress, and other elected leaders. May they be moved to make ending hunger in our own country and around the world by 2030 a priority for our nation. Grant them clear minds and generous hearts to sustain and improve those programs that provide help and opportunity to so many people. In the name of Christ who came not to be served but to serve. Amen.

Action Item: If your health allows, try to fast for one day. Limit yourself to only drink some fruit juices and eat 1 or 2 cups of cooked rice.

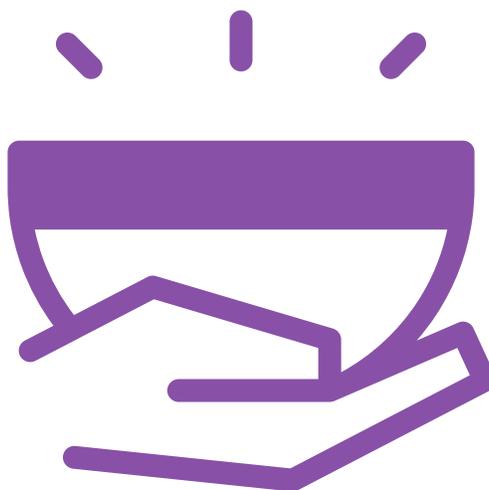
MARCH 11

Hunger Fact: By cutting SNAP benefits and adding stricter work requirements at a time when food insecurity is so elevated and food prices continue to rise, a significant burden for food provision will be placed on state agencies, churches, and food banks that are under-resourced and not designed to meet the nutritional needs of their communities at this scale. - *Bread for the World*

Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 15:10-11

Prayer: O God, look with compassion on the one in seven Americans who face hunger in this country. Preserve their dignity as they struggle to get enough to eat. May those who are unable to work be supported and sustained by their communities. Amen.

Action Item: If your congregation offers grants or you are a member of Thrivent with Action Team grants available, talk to your local food pantry or feeding ministry what needs they have.



MARCH 12

Hunger Fact: For 30 years, USDA has released in-depth annual reports on the state of food security for families across the United States. This report has provided a firm foundation of data for lawmakers and advocates focused on eliminating hunger and food insecurity across the nation. - *Rev. Eugene Cho, president and CEO of Bread for the World* (statement after the USDA announced it will no longer issue these reports in Sep 2025.)

Bible Verse: James 2:15-17

Prayer: God the Creator, I give thanks for my church and all other churches that work together to end hunger, bless the efforts of those organizations that offer relief in times of emergency as well as those who support long-term development. May our witness to the Gospel of your love and compassion shine ever more brightly. Amen.

Action Item: Buy some protein and donate to a “Little Free Pantry” or local food bank. Items taken frequently are canned chicken (pair with a chicken flavored rice or noodle packet that only requires water to make), canned tuna (pair with tuna helper), Vienna sausages, SPAM, Peanut butter (add crackers or some jelly).

MARCH 13

Hunger Fact: People with disabilities are 3 times more likely to experience food insecurity than people without disabilities.

Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:1

Prayer: Our Loving Creator God, we bring before you this day the burden the whole world carries as it endures extreme poverty and hunger in every land.

Stretch out your loving arms, we pray, to embrace the suffering women, men and children whose bodies, minds and spirits are shrinking before our very eyes.

Help us to look, really look, with clear eyes and open hearts, to see the pain and hopelessness in their bewildered eyes.

Kindle within each one of us a flame of love and purpose, and then enable us to channel our love into action in every way possible and impossible. For this we pray. Amen

*Written by Mimi A. Simson, in "Lifting Women's Voices: Prayers to Change the World."
Posted on the Episcopal Relief & Development website.*

Action Item: Reflection: What could be done to bring about parity here?

MARCH 14

Hunger Fact: This paper examines whether schoolwide free meals affect disciplinary outcomes, focusing on the use of suspensions. Under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), schools serving sufficiently high-poverty populations may enroll their entire student bodies in free lunch and breakfast programs, extending free meals to some students who would not qualify individually and potentially decreasing the stigma associated with school meals. We leverage the staggered rollout of CEP across states and school discipline measures for the near-universe of public schools to assess how disciplinary infractions change within a school as it becomes eligible for CEP. We conclude that schoolwide free meals reduced suspensions statistically significantly by approximately 17 percent for white male elementary students.

Gordon, Nora, and Krista Ruffini. "Schoolwide free meals and student discipline: Effects of the community eligibility provision." Education Finance and Policy 16.3 (2021): 418-442.

Bible Verse: Matthew 25:40

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we cry out to You for the millions of people around the world – half of them children – who are on the brink of famine. Covid, climate change and conflict are causing hunger in places where it's already difficult for children to survive. Be with each child, each person, Lord. Give them your hope and comfort, and the food they need. Amen.

Action Item: Reflection: What shortcomings and what benefits do you see in providing food to children at school? How, if at all, could that system be improved?

MARCH 15

4th Sunday in Lent- Reflect on Gospel reading of John 9:1-41

MARCH 16

Hunger Fact: 3 of 5 US teachers report seeing children coming to school hungry. - *ELCA World Hunger Backpacks Guide*

Bible Verse: Psalm 107:9

Prayer: Lord, in you there is hope. We trust in You and ask that You will work in governments and organizations to bring aid and food to those countries, to those individuals, most in need.

Action Item: Shelf stable milk is not something often donated but really helps complete meals such as cereal. Donate shelf stable milk to a local food pantry or local food pantry.

MARCH 17

Hunger Fact: “Nutritional variability due to SNAP timing might impact student performance either through hunger or access to key nutrients. A growing body of literature suggests that specific nutrients can improve cognitive functioning.

(Bryan, Calvaresi, & Hughes, 2002; Gómez-Pinilla, 2008) as well as the executive functioning skills needed to successfully take standardized achievement tests (Cohen, Gorski, Gruber, Kurdziel, & Rimm, 2016).”

Bible Verse: Luke 4:16-21

Prayer: Lord God, as we face the worst food crisis in 50 years, we ask you give all at World Vision wisdom. Be with each local staff member as they seek to support those in need, with food and other supplies. Give them resilience and energy as they do all in their power to help families facing hunger.

Action Item: Read Bread for the World, Hunger in the US.
(<https://www.bread.org/hunger-explained/hunger-in-the-u-s/>)

MARCH 18

Hunger Fact: By cutting SNAP benefits and adding stricter work requirements at a time when food insecurity is so elevated and food prices continue to rise, a significant burden for food provision will be placed on state agencies, churches, and food banks that are under-resourced and not designed to meet the nutritional needs of their communities at this scale. *Rev. Eugene Cho, president and CEO of Bread for the World*

Bible Verse: Luke 6:20-21, 24-25

Prayer: I should like a great lake of finest ale for the King of Kings. I should like a table of the choicest food for the family of heaven. Let the ale be made from the fruits of faith and the food be forgiving love.

I should welcome the poor to my feast, for they are God's children. I should welcome the sick to my feast, for they are God's joy. Let the poor sit with Jesus at the highest place, and the sick dance with angels.

God bless the poor. God bless the sick and bless our human race. God bless our food. God bless our drink; all homes, O God, embrace. Amen.
- *St. Brigid Prayer*

Action Item: Take a meal to your neighbor or a person in your community.

MARCH 19

Hunger Fact: 22% of people under the age of 18 live in poverty in US. - *ELCA World Hunger Backpacks Guide*

Bible Verse: Galatians 6:2

Prayer: Let us pray for the health of women, children, and families around the world, especially for an end to maternal and child mortality, that in building healthy families, all God's people may be empowered to strengthen their communities and repair the breaches which divide nations and peoples. - *National Catholic Rural Life Conference*

Action Item: Advocate on behalf of the hungry. Write to your senators or representatives asking them to strengthen WIC and SNAP Programs. - *Bread for the World*

MARCH 20

Hunger Fact: US SNAP benefit statistics more than 62% of SNAP participants are in families with children more than 37% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled more than 38% are in working families. - *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*

Bible Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:12

Prayer: Can you think of writing a prayer of gratitude that a person who is hungry might say?

Action Item: Organize a meal train to respond to folks in grief, joy, and need of community.

MARCH 21

Hunger Fact: Indiana SNAP benefit Statistics more than 69% of SNAP participants are in families with children more than 38% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled more than 34% are in working families. - *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*

Bible Verse: John 4:13-14

Prayer: Can you think of prayer of lamentation that a person experiencing hunger might say?

Action Item: Consider supporting Meals on Wheels or other food sharing organizations.

MARCH 22

5th Sunday in Lent-Meditate on the Gospel lesson today John 11:1-45

MARCH 23

Hunger Fact: Kentucky SNAP facts more than 68% of SNAP participants are in families with children more than 38% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled more than 38% are in working families. - *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*

Bible Verse: Micah 6:8

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we pray for an end to world hunger. When we give thanks for our own daily food, we include all who are hungry at home and abroad and not take for granted how blessed we really are. Amen. - *Guideposts*

Action Item: When you shop for your groceries, buy double the amount for some of the staples and donate them to a local food pantry.

MARCH 24

Hunger Fact: Food insecurity rates rose sharply, with some data indicating a jump from 13.3% in October to 16% in November 2025
. - *Feed America*

Bible Verse: Luke 9:13-17

Prayer: Hold us in your transformative love; hold us in your demanding justice; hold us deep in your compassion, that we may live for the neighborhood in new ways, bound as we are together in the neighborhood, all of us together, rich and poor, young and old, beautiful and bruised, all of us before you. You are creator. You are savior. You are hovering spirit. We will, we pledge travel in your newness. Amen.

Action Item: Listen to ELCA Advocacy's podcast, Housing and Homelessness Trends and Policy Impacts. Learn about pressing issues of housing and homelessness in the United States and how you can help find creative and affordable solutions through advocacy action.

(<https://hereipod.buzzsprout.com/2454298/episodes/16829832-s1-episode-1-housing-and-homelessness-trends-and-policy-impacts>)

MARCH 25

Hunger Fact: There is large variation across the states in food insecurity. Kentucky ranks 31st among the 50 states with 7.7 % of the population over 60 being food insecure. Indiana ranks 36th with 8% of the elderly population being food insecure.

Bible Verse: Psalm 146:5-7

Prayer: Lord, we are so grateful for the food that You have set before us. We know not everyone has what we do and we thank You for everything You have given to us. We also want to take this time to pray for the poor and hungry who lack resources. Please be with them and sustain them. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Action Item: Reflection: Why do you think these two states rank below average in this dimension?



MARCH 26

Hunger Fact: Gaps are needs that are not currently being met. These are niches that no current service provider is filling. Gaps can be geographic, logistic or material.

Logistic gaps are related to the “how” of community services. This includes the hours a program is open, accessibility of the building, etc. For example, a community may have several feeding ministries nearby, but none are open in the evening. This creates a niche that a new ministry could fill. Or, a community may not have a ministry that is accessible for people with limited mobility or neighbors who are homebound.- *ELCA World Hunger’s Feeding Ministry Guide*

Bible Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Prayer: Write your own table prayer that is mindful of all the people who have contributed to your meal.

Action Item: Read through the ELCA Economic Life Social Statement Introduction.

(https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/Economic_LifeSS_Introduction.pdf)

MARCH 27

Hunger Fact: An estimated 7.4 million seniors (60 and older) and 5.2 million older adults (50-59) experienced food insecurity in 2023. - *Feeding America*

Bible Verse: Matthew 5:42-43

Prayer: God of power, the numbers are daunting when we really think about them. We see war and famine and hunger that result from unresolved conflict, climate change, negligence, corruption. But your scripture says to behold your works, trust in your power.

Help us to understand that we don't have to be in control. We just have to do what you call us to do... Pray without ceasing, speak up for those who have no voice, and give of our time, talent, and treasure.

We pray in the name of the one whose strength knows no bounds. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Action Item: Read the article, Why are people malnourished in the richest country on Earth? (*recommended by ELCA's World Hunger Backpack guide*)

(<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/hunger/>)

MARCH 28

Hunger Fact: More than 2 out of 5 people facing hunger may not be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) since their incomes exceed the income eligibility threshold for these critical benefits. Not all who are eligible for the program participate in SNAP. - *Feeding America*

Bible Verse: Hebrews 10:22

Prayer: O God, you are the creator of the world, the liberator of your people, and the wisdom of the earth. By the resurrection of your Son, free us from our fears, restore us in your image and ignite us with your light through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Action Item: Check your local homeless shelter website. Find what foods they need donated and donate some of those items to them.

MARCH 29

PALM
SUNDAY



Reflect on the Gospel of Matthew 27:11-54 today.

MARCH 30

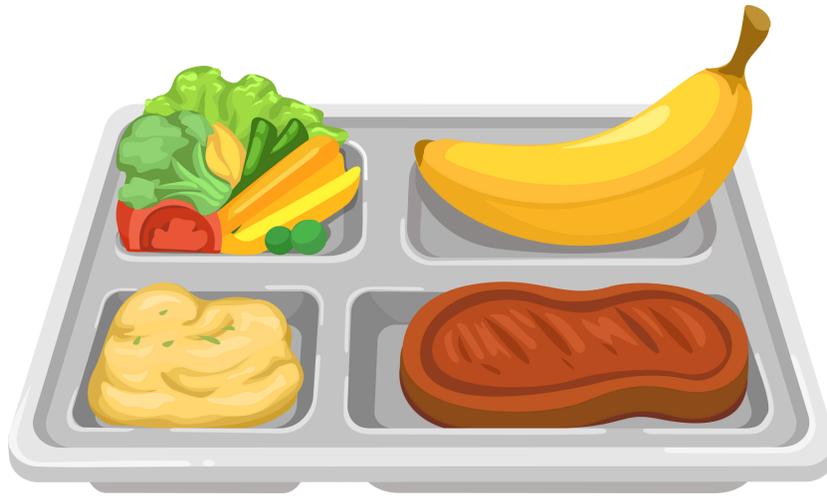
Hunger Fact: Studies confirm that food insecurity is an independent risk factor for gunshot injuries, suggesting that neighborhoods with more food-insecure individuals face higher rates of gun violence. - *National Institutes of Health Study*

Bible Verse: Isaiah 50:7-8

Prayer: God, you are the living power of grace. You call us to join the good fights for justice and peace. Give us the wisdom to choose our battles wisely and strengthen us with the witness of all the saints. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Action Item: Meals that are hearty that you can just heat and eat are a blessing when people are hungry. Examples are Chef-Boy-R Dee products, beef stew, chicken and dumplings, hearty soups, and chili. Donate some today to a local pantry or food bank.





MARCH 31

Hunger Fact: Research demonstrates that school breakfast consumption: ✓ Boosts students' academic performance, grades and test scores ✓ Increases concentration, alertness, comprehension and memory ✓ Improves classroom behavior ✓ Reduces absenteeism and tardiness-School Nutrition Association

Bible Verse: Psalm 23:4-6

Prayer: God, from your generative word came water that sustains our daily life. From the depths of your heart, the living waters spring and sustain our faith. When we are thirsty for hope, we come to the well of your spirit. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great

Action Item: If you have a Ronald McDonald House nearby, sign-up to make one of the dinners there. Being in the hospital with a child costs a lot. Parents usually have to provide their own food when their child is hospitalized. This can be very difficult for people who already suffer from food insecurity.

APRIL 1

Hunger Fact: For many American families, the supplemental food assistance program Women, Infants, and Children, WIC, is essential. It assists about 6 million people with food expenditures at an annual cost of about \$5 billion. WIC provides vouchers to low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under age five that can be used to purchase specific nutritious foods.

What happens after the 5th birthday when the child no longer qualifies for WIC? Surprisingly perhaps, there is no decline in nutrition of the children as they age out of the program. Perhaps even more surprisingly, women in the household, most likely the mothers, adjust their nutrition. Their calorie intake goes down; their food insecurity goes up.

Bible Verse: Romans 5:10-11

Prayer: Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great

Action Item: Reflection-Imagine that you are 15 years old and you find out that at age 5 your mother went hungry so you could eat. What response might that knowledge elicit in you?

APRIL 2-MAUNDY THURSDAY

Hunger Fact: Most WIC participants live below the poverty line, which for a family of three in 2025 is \$26,650. WIC enables families to purchase additional nutritious foods and provides health care referrals and information on healthy eating.

Bible Verse: John 13:12-20

Prayer: Stir us by your spirit beyond fearful accumulation toward outrageous generosity, that giving bread to others makes for peace, that giving drink to others makes for justice, that giving and sharing opens the world and assures abundance for all. We pray this even as we ponder the gift of your Son whom we ingest as bread and wine, and tasting, find ourselves forgiven and renewed. Feed us till we want no more! Amen. -Walter Brueggemann - *Prayers for a Privileged People / Prayer is called: Prayers for the People*

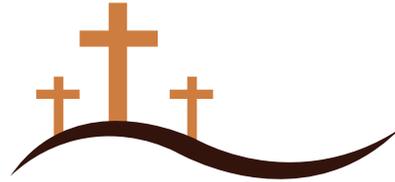
Action Item: When you are at the grocery store and you are about to purchase your favorite brand item, could you consider buying a cheaper brand, perhaps the generic good? How much money would you save? In a month? A year?



APRIL 3-GOOD FRIDAY

Hunger Fact: 55.1% of surveyed schools had unpaid student meal debt.-
Education Data Initiative

Bible Verse: John 3:16-17



Prayer: Compassionate God, by the bounty of your creation, you have sustained us with food to eat. Through the wisdom of your heart, you have provided us with time to rest. Help us to be careful stewards of your generosity. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Action Item: Stay engaged with ELCA Advocacy throughout the year by signing up for ELCA Advocacy Action Alerts.

(<https://give.elca.org/page/65066/subscriptions/1>)

APRIL 4

Hunger Fact: SNAP does not pay for toilet paper, dishwashing soap, trash bags, feminine hygiene products, and personal care items.

Bible Verse: John 13:31-35

Prayer: God of provision and plenty, you bless us and call us your own. Help us share the abundance of your love with people who are oppressed, hungry and experiencing homelessness. Open our hearts and hands to the needs of others. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great

Action Item: Buy some of the items listed above in the “Hunger Fact”. Donate them to a Little Pantry or Blessing Box in your neighborhood.



HAPPY
Easter

