

# Bread from Heaven

## A Hunger Emphasis Communion Service

by Katie Cook

### *Responsive Call to Worship*

FIRST READER: O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? How long shall I cry out to you about the violence of hunger in the land, and you will not save us?

SECOND READER: If only we had died in the land of Egypt; you have brought us out to this desert to kill us with hunger.

FIRST READER: Why do you allow me to see all of this wrongdoing? Why do you make me eyes to see all of this trouble? How long must we wait for your justice to come? How long must we wait for your deliverance?

SECOND READER: We had plenty to eat in Egypt, plenty of meat and plenty of bread. Now we are wandering in this strange land, with nothing to eat.

THIRD READER: Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. Each day the people shall go out and gather enough food for that day."

FOURTH READER: Then the Lord said to Habakkuk, "Write the vision; make it large and plain so that even a runner can read it."

THIRD READER: Then the Lord said to the people through the prophet Malachi, "Put me to the test, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour down for you blessings beyond your wildest dreams."

FOURTH READER: And the Lord said, "There is still a vision for the appointed time. If it seems to take a long time, wait for it. It will come, and it will not delay."

—Adapted from *Exodus 16: 3-4; Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-3; Malachi 3:10-12*

### *Invocation*

God of abundance, we come before you today in gratitude for the bounty we have been given. Make us more aware of the gifts around us, that

we may exult in the goodness of creation. Open the windows of heaven, pour out your blessings for us, and grace us to share those blessings with others. Pour your energy over us, that we may go from here with renewed strength. Pour out your breath, that we may have the courage to go out and live our calling. Pour out your wisdom, that we would know where to guide our feet. Open our eyes, that we may see the vision you have written out for us. Open our hearts, that we may know that we have been in your presence today.

### *Hebrew Scripture Reading*

Exodus 16:1-18

### *Hymn*

"I Hunger and I Thirst"

*Chalice Hymnal #409*

Words: John S. B. Monsell, 1866

Music: Maria Tiddeman, 1875

Tune: IBSTONE

### *Epistle reading*

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

### *Gospel Reading*

Matthew 25:31-41

### *The Bread*

The world is full of hunger—for bread and for spiritual nourishment. On the night before his death, Jesus was at supper with his friends. He took bread from the table and blessed it, and gave thanks for it. Then he gave it to his friends, saying, "Take this and eat it, for it is my body." As we take this bread, we remember that he also said, "Whenever you give bread to the least of my brothers and sisters, you have given it to me."

### *The Cup*

On the night before his death, Jesus also took a cup of wine from the table; and when he had

given thanks, he gave it his friends, and said, "Drink this, all of you." In drinking from this cup, we remember that he also said, "Whenever you give something to my brothers and sisters to drink, you have also quenched my thirst."

### *Communion Music*

As the elements are distributed, play Michael Stern's "When Did We See You." The song is two minutes and 38 seconds, so you may want to add "One and All" from the same album (Come What May). "One and All" is four minutes and 30 seconds. For a copy of the CD or download, go to [www.mikesongs.net](http://www.mikesongs.net).

### *Communion Blessing*

At this table we celebrate the faithfulness and provision of our God, who opens the windows of heaven, and rains down bread upon us. O God, we give thanks to you, for the gifts you give us to sustain our lives. Bless this bread to be the Manna

that nourishes us. Bless this cup to be the drink of new life. Help us to faithfully receive this food and drink. May it strengthen us to follow Christ and to become holy manna for a hungry world.

### *Hymn*

"Fill the World with Love"

*Chalice Hymnal #467*

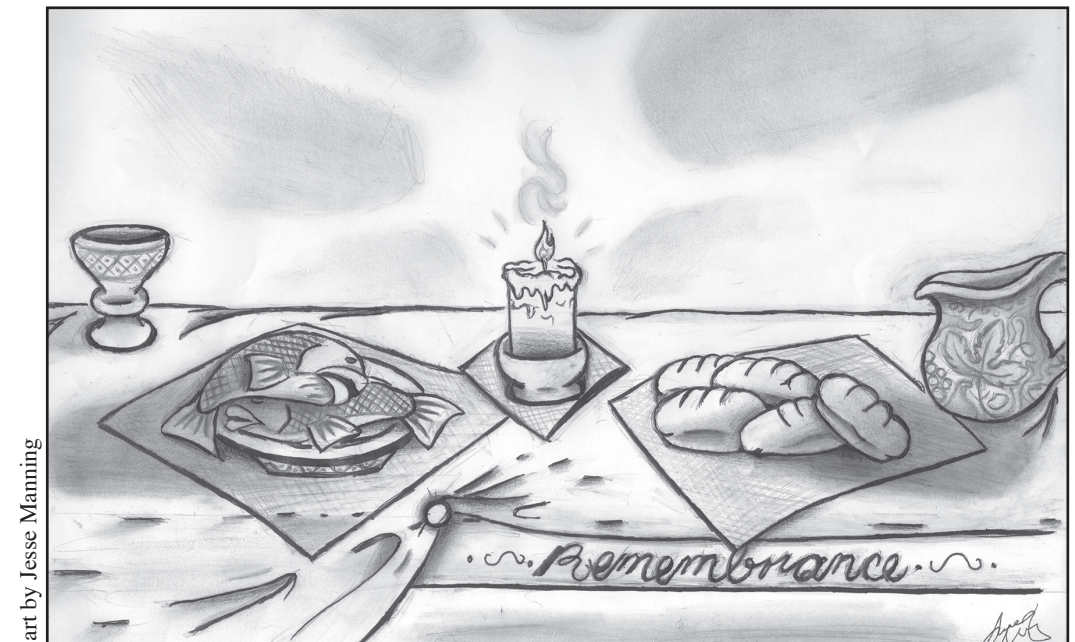
Words: David L. Edwards, 1992

Music: David L. Edwards, 1992

Tune: COMPASSION

### *Benediction*

Gracious God, as we go from this place, open our hearts and eyes to each other and to your children in need. Help us to see your face in the faces of our neighbors. Open our hands, that we may share out of our abundance. Free us from the fear that would cause us to close our hands or to pass by the neighbor in need. Give us the courage to go to the places where you would go, the places where your children need our help.



art by Jesse Manning