

Let Justice Roll Down Like Water



Worship Resources for the Creative Church - Hunger Emphasis 2017

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Sacred Seasons



Worship Tools for the Creative Church

These unique resource packets are available for the liturgical year, three packets a year for \$100 (\$125 for non-US subscriptions), one packet for \$50 (\$65 outside of the US).

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Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope, Inc., is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional.

Let Justice Roll Down Like Water

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A 40-Day Hunger Emphasis calendar
A Hunger Emphasis placemat

For 26 years, the group has sought out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of hunger and poverty.

Editorial Address

The Seeds of Hope ministry is housed by the community of faith at Seventh & James Baptist Church. The mailing address is: 602 James; Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor1@gmail.com. Web address: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2017.

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a word about this packet

The Seeds liturgical team wrestled for quite some time with the theme of this packet. We wanted to have an Earth Care theme, and we know that environmental degradation always affects poor and vulnerable populations the most.

We know that, in the long term, we will all suffer from the abuse we are inflicting on our planet. However, in the short term, those who create most of the pollution are hardly ever the ones who suffer from it. We kept hearing the voice of Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff in his book, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, in which he extends the realm of liberation to ecology and its close relationship to poverty.

Within that theme, we kept running into writings about water. Anita Peebles, a Vanderbilt Divinity student, shared a sermon she had written for a class, “Come to the Water,” around which Guilherme Almeida and I wrote our liturgy. (Guilherme is a Seeds Council member and our resident liturgist.)

We also borrowed and adapted a litany and ritual, based on water justice, from a wonderful resource published by the World Council of Churches. Laura Mayo, pastor of Covenant Baptist Church in Houston, shared a communion sermon, which we named “The Sacred Act of Eating.” We added a table ritual to be used with that sermon.

We have many other contributions for which to be thankful. Larkin Rossiter, a retired United Church of Christ minister and professor at Cochise College in Nogales, AZ, wrote a desert meditation especially for this theme. Our Fall 2017 intern, Rachel Boyle, compiled several lists of facts, designed two puzzles about earth care and created two art pieces. Sally Askins, a member of the Council of Stewards and our “artist in residence,” taking the unbelievably vague and random ideas that we first gave her, created the stunning cover art that became the inspiration for the whole packet.

We are also grateful to Ellen Brown, who has now survived her first year as our chief copy editor and shows a great deal of patience as we obsess over these resources. We are also deeply grateful for all of you who subscribe to *Sacred Seasons*, and who make use of these gifts in your worship and work.

As always, we want you to feel free to play around with these resources, and adapt them to your congregation’s needs and resources. The contents

of this packet are your congregation’s to use freely and share with others as the need arises. May we find a way to restore the bounty of the earth—and to make sure all of God’s people have plenty of food and clean water.

—Gratefully,
Katie Cook, on behalf of the Seeds staff
and Council of Stewards

A Glass of Water

by Nadine N. Doughty

Thirsty, I turned the kitchen faucet on,
let the water run a bit
to cool it down.

More refreshing that way.

Taken for granted that it is
clean, fresh, and tasty,
and available,
this water awaits and fills our needs.

Easy to forget
or ignore
the fact of water’s
scarcity, impurity, staleness
in some other parts of the world.

To walk a mile to fill a bucket
or boil each gallon
before it can be drunk
and hike once more to sprinkle
the garden vegetables
is hard to visualize.

Surviving drought and rationing each cupful,
with frantic seeking for another source
of water just for sheer survival
is hard to visualize.

Newly aware of its value
and of our good fortune

I savor my glass of water
and drink it slowly.

—Dee Doughty, a longtime contributor to Seeds publications, has worked in soup kitchens and ministries for the poor in Evanston, Illinois for many years.

Come to the Water *a Hunger Emphasis liturgy*

by Katie Cook & Guilherme Feitosa de Almeida

Call to Worship

ONE: Let our ears be attentive to the word of God.

MANY: We come to listen so that we may live.

ONE: Let our lips be clean and our words true.

MANY: We come to drink so we may thirst no more.

ONE: Let our hearts be pure and full of kindness.

MANY: We come to eat so we may hunger no more.

ONE: We summon all creation to worship a God who loves us all.

MANY: We summon all creation to worship a God who knows neither beginning nor end.

ONE: We summon the nations to worship a God who knows no borders.

MANY: We summon the nations to worship a God who knows no scarcity.

Hymn

“Mine Are the Hungry”

WORDS: Kenneth I. Morse (1974)

MUSIC: Wilbur E. Brumbaugh (1974)

TUNE: MINE ARE THE HUNGRY 11.11.11.11.

The Brethren Songbook No. 33

First Reading from the Prophets

Isaiah 55:1-13

Meditation

To live, we must daily break the body
and shed the blood of creation.

When we do it knowingly, lovingly,
skillfully, reverently,
it is a sacrament.

When we do it ignorantly,
greedily, destructively,
it is a desecration.

—Wendell Berry, “The Gift of Good Land”

Second Reading from the Prophets

Amos 5:21-27

Hymn

“God of the Poor”

WORDS and MUSIC: Graham Kendrick (1993)
CCLI Song No. 1236690

Reading from the Revelation

Revelation 21:1-7

Hymn

“Touch the Earth Lightly”

WORDS: Shirley Erena Murray (1992)

MUSIC: Swee Hong Lim (2005)

TUNE: AI HU 10.10.10.10.

Lift Up Your Hearts No. 18

Gospel Reading

John 4: 5-15

Sermon

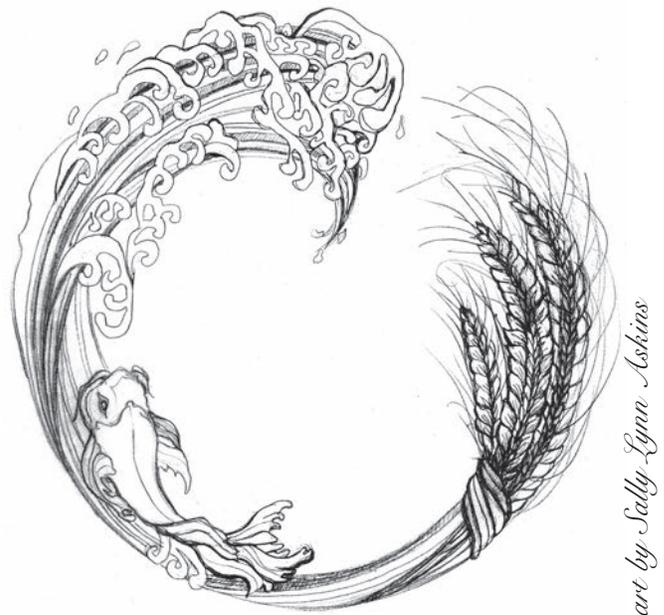
See “Come to the Water” by Anita Peebles on page 6.

Litany of Commitment

(for three readers)

FIRST READER: O God, you made for us an earth
full of beauty and wonder and abundance, and
we have taken it for granted.

SECOND READER: Let all who thirst, let them
come, let them come to the water.



art by Sally Lynn Ashires

THIRD READER: We've been unfaithful stewards. We have exploited your gift. We have torn apart the Beloved Community of creation.

SECOND READER: Let all who thirst, let them come, let them come to the water.

FIRST READER: We have destroyed or hoarded the resources of the earth. Many of your children don't have clean water or enough food, while many of us have more than we need.

THIRD READER: Many of your children thirst for clean water while many of us thirst for living water. We all thirst for justice.

SECOND READER: Let all who thirst, let them come, let them come to the water.

FIRST READER: Bring us to the living water today, and send us forth as healers of your creation. Show us how to make justice roll down like waters.

THIRD READER: In the name of your Son, who spoke to us of living water.

ALL: Amen.

Note: The litany above could be used with a ritual of water. If you wish to do this, prepare a bowl of water and a towel to place on the altar or at various stations around the worship area. At this point in the service, ask congregants to come forward and form a line. Each could dip his or her hand in the water, touching the next person's forehead, saying, "May God send us forth as healers of creation." Musicians could play quiet music, perhaps one of the hymns on these pages, as congregants anoint one another. You could have more than one line if your group is large. If so, you will need a bowl and towel for each line. (See also the water ritual and litany from the World Council of Churches on page 10. That ritual could be substituted here.)

Meditation

Environmental degradation, warfare and poverty are all part of a sinful pathology that sees us as separate beings. Salvation is never just about our own personal, individual salvation; it's about the salvation of us all. It's about saving the world and being a part of the solution.

—Doug Donley, "Children of the Earth"

Hymn of Commitment

"Restless Weaver, Ever Spinning"

WORDS: O. I. Cricket Harrison (1988)

MUSIC: B. F. White (1844)

TUNE: BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7.D.

Chalice Hymnal No. 658

Benediction

God—where your earth is violated, desecrated, destroyed and defamed, give us the strength, the will, the heart to go there, physically, mentally, spiritually and prayerfully to help mend what is broken. Make our hands and feet the bearers of good news, the messengers of beauty, the restorers of peace.

—Claire McKeever Burgett, "Prayer to the Creator"

Note: Katie Cook is the Seeds of Hope editor. Guilherme Almeida, a native of Brazil, is a lecturer in Musical Theater at Baylor University, a Baptist minister specializing in music, a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and a frequent liturgist for Sacred Seasons.

Water in Scripture

From the waters of the deep referenced in Genesis to the "river of the water of life" in Revelation, water plays a prominent role in our scriptural and liturgical tradition. Arising from a semiarid part of the world, the Bible exhibits a keen understanding of how essential water is to life and the dire consequences that arise when water is scarce.

Suggested passages for reflection:

Genesis 1:1-10 Creation of land and seas

Exodus 14:21-29 Parting the Red Sea

Exodus 17:3-7 Water from the rock

Psalms 107:35-41 God turns deserts into pools

Proverbs 25:21 Give water to your enemies

Isaiah 21:14 Bring water to the thirsty

Isaiah 35:6-7 Waters shall break forth in the desert

Isaiah 55:1 Everyone who thirsts, come

Matthew 25:31-45 I was thirsty and you gave me drink

John 4:7-15 Woman at the well

Revelation 22:1-2 The river of the water of life

—List compiled by Church World Service

Come to the Water

a sermon by Anita Peebles

*Let all who thirst,
Let them come, let them come to the water.*

God invites us to come to the water. And Lord, we are thirsty.

The Samaritan woman is thirsty too. She lives in the shadow of Mt. Gerizim, the traditional place of cultic worship for the Samaritan people. There is a well at the foot of the mountain. People say it's the one that Jacob started, where he met Rachel; where

Jesus truly sees the woman as a whole person, sees beyond entrenched ethnic divisions and variations in religious practice, sees an opportunity to make a new relationship possible.

Rebekah was asked to become Isaac's wife. It is a place where families are combined and flow together into one future of possibility.

The woman brings her clay jar to this well in the middle of a hot day. She can't bear to bring it in the morning, when the other women come to draw water for cooking and for bathing their children, so she comes in the middle of the day, at noon. She carries pain in her jar; she carries pain to the well today. When she arrives, she thirsts. She meets Jesus at the well.

Jesus meets the woman at the well and asks for some water to drink. I always think this is a little bit rude of Jesus, asking the woman to pause in her daily duties to give him a drink. But in the conversation that ensues, it becomes clear that Jesus sees her as more than someone with a bucket, more than someone who can fulfill his physical thirst at this moment.

Jesus truly *sees* the woman as a whole person, *sees* beyond entrenched ethnic divisions and variations in religious practice, *sees* an opportunity to make a new relationship possible. He sees her as someone to whom he can offer *living water*.

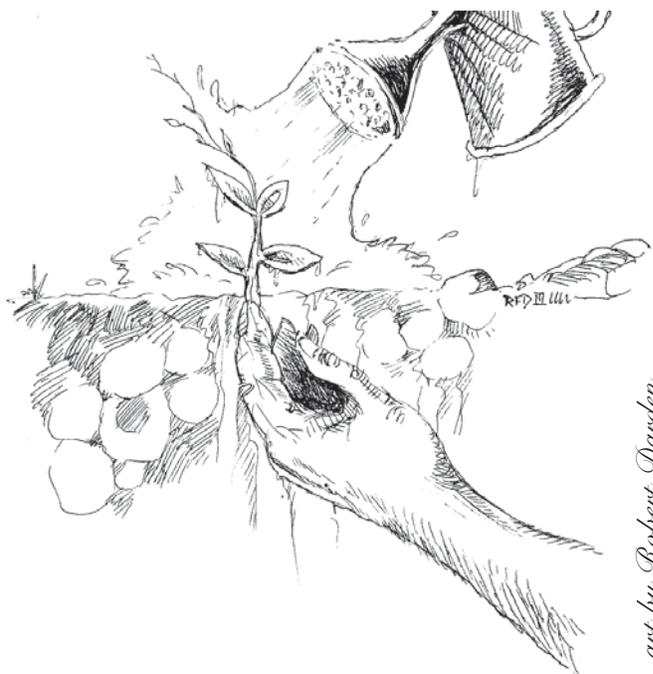
What is this *living water*?

Living water is that which quenches our thirst, both physically and spiritually. Living waters are available to everyone, no matter what their life experience and geographical context. Living waters flow from the spirit and can empower and equip people to persevere in the midst of oppressive and unjust situations. Living waters are the gospel. Living waters are the waters of justice.

And the woman is not the only one at the well that day who is thirsty for these living waters. Jesus is thirsty for the waters of justice as well. He sees the injustice in the world, sees the blind beggars and the hungry people on the highways and byways and the tax collectors living greedy, half-fulfilled lives.

He sees the women like Rachel, weeping for their children crushed under the state-sanctioned violence in Rome, or perhaps in Ferguson, MO, or Baltimore, MD. He sees the Samaritan woman, longing for community and thirsty for just treatment. And I believe he sees the thirst of those in Flint, MI, as well.

When I first heard the news out of Flint—that officials had diverted the city's water source to the Flint River, causing residents to be exposed to dangerous levels of lead—I was heartbroken. I grew up in a town about an hour's drive from Flint. I know the shared economic history of this area,



art by Robert Darden

shaped by the auto industry. I also know the “Pure Michigan” tourism ads, featuring actor Tim Allen’s voice narrating rich descriptions of the “hidden treasure” of Michigan with pastoral images of Michigan’s land and water.

Juxtaposed with this, I see the harsh reality of Flint’s water crisis, primarily affecting people of color living in the inner city. I see Flint residents toting gallons of smelly, yellow water everywhere they go in an attempt to prove they are being poisoned.

Lord, we thirst for justice.

*Why do we hurry to offer spiritual living water without literally giving our neighbors and siblings a drink of fresh, clear water?
Why is it so outrageous to suggest the idea of fixing the systems that prevent people from accessing their right to clean water?*

Over a period of 18 months, between April 25, 2014 and August 2015, the government of Flint sanctioned the use of water from the Flint River for the city’s water source, instead of a pipeline from Detroit, which had been in use for 50 years before that. Government officials hoped that this would save money for the struggling post-industrial city.

The decision was made even after research by the Department of Environmental Quality warned that the river water could be unsafe. What ultimately happened was that the city did not properly treat the Flint River water, and the level of chlorides in the water corroded the city’s ancient lead pipes, leading to water laced with lead flowing into people’s homes.

Doctors in Flint have reported that the proportion of children with above-average levels of lead in their blood has nearly doubled since 2014. The medical conditions associated with lead poisoning range from skin lesions, hair loss, and increased asthma reactions—to chemically-induced hypertension, vision loss, depression and brain damage.

The World Health Organization writes that the neurological and behavioral effects of lead are believed to be irreversible. We won’t know for years

what the consequences of this budget-tightening response measure will be for the children of Flint.

“We’re like disposable people here,” one resident told the *Toronto Star*. “We’re not even human, I guess.” Another resident told the *Detroit Free Press* “We get treated like we don’t matter.”

Lord, we thirst for justice.

Ryan Cumming, writing for the *Huffington Post* in an article titled “Finding Faith in Flint,” says, “It is impossible to miss the sacramental volatility of water, that medium that gives life and takes life. It encapsulates the irony of living in the Great Lakes State without clean water to drink. It symbolizes both the life-giving grace of the created world and the death-dealing abuses of power that come when we silence and marginalize our neighbors. It is the touchpoint that knits together people across the spectrum of faiths and no-faith. It has become a rallying point for a community to come together.”

*Let all who thirst,
Let them come, let them come to the water.*

When I think about the lack of justice in Flint, there is a sad irony that points to the contamination of more than just H₂O. In crises, we often are willing to extend spiritual living water to those experiencing oppression or injustice, saying with good intention and a willing heart: *I’ll pray for them.*

But why do we hurry to offer spiritual living water without literally giving our neighbors and siblings a drink of fresh, clear water? Why is it so outrageous to suggest that we fix the systems that prevent people from accessing their right to clean water?

Friends, it is WE who are spiritually contaminated, because we hesitate to do what Jesus did with the woman at the well. We hesitate to truly SEE the situation. We hesitate to see people as fully human, because we are too steeped in our own lives, our own problems and our own narrow view of the world to see across differences and cultural divides. We look away from those in the poorest areas of our state, across our country and around the world. We look away from our neighbors, and our ignorance lets this catastrophe continue.

All the time, we put up barriers that divide the world into categories of *us* and *them*, or maybe it’s *white* and *black*, *rich* and *poor*. Maybe it’s divided by hemisphere: people of the *north* and *south*, people of the *west* and *east*. Maybe it’s *Americans* and *others*.

Whatever these divisions and binaries, when we live in a way that divides us from being aware of the

basic needs of our neighbors, we are reducing each other to *us* and *them* categories. We are consenting to see each other as less than human, not deserving of the same health and wellbeing.

As Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew says,

For I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink... truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. (Matt. 25: 42-43 NRSV)

When we support systems that deny access to a basic human right such as clean drinking water, we are denying Jesus. And we are denying spiritual living water to ourselves at the same time.

Lord, we thirst for justice.

Jesus gives us an example of how to see the injustice present in the world and take action. Speaking to her present context, Jesus truly sees the woman at the well and knows what she needs.

Though she is thirsty and has come to the well to draw water, the Samaritan woman is so overcome with Jesus' knowledge of her past, so overwhelmed with the feeling of truly being seen and valued as her own person and not just as her ethnicity or marital status, that she runs into the city to tell everyone about the man "who knew everything about me."

The text tells us that the woman leaves her jar behind, the jar with which she had planned to carry precious water back to her home, the jar whose emptiness prompted her to come to the well in the first place. Why would she leave it behind? Who will fill this woman's jar?

Leaving the jar, the woman must have a deep trust, not only that she will receive that living water, but that her physical needs will also be met. Perhaps this woman knows that she will enter into the beloved community, similar to the community of Acts 2, where each person's material needs are provided for in a kind of sharing economy.

By drinking from the living water, the woman is no longer shamed within her community for her past relationships. A patriarchal reading of this scripture that denigrates her sexuality and assumes her multiple past partners must be a source of grief for her.

By drinking of the living water, the Samaritan woman at the well becomes part of the community that experiences Jesus firsthand—including those he has healed, those who have appealed to him for healings of their loved ones, and those to whom he

has revealed his true nature as the messiah of God, no matter if they are Jews or Gentiles. Or Samaritans.

She must have known that Jesus performs physical healing which then makes spiritual healing possible. Jesus was always healing people's physical needs without first asking proof of their religious pedigree. Just ask blind Bartimaeus and the man who sat near the pool of Bethsaida. This woman must have known somehow that becoming part of the community of Jesus' followers would bring not only living water for her soul, but also living water to *drink*.

The question now before us is this: Will we fill each other's jars with the waters of justice? Will we stand in the way of systems that oppress, and help each other gain access to this living water?

I challenge you to commit to working with your neighbors to help spread the gospel of living water. You can do this by taking action to help people in Flint and in many other places where people do not have access to safe water.

An overwhelming series of natural disasters has swept over our part of the world, leaving people along the Gulf of Mexico, in the Caribbean and in Mexico reeling from hurricanes and earthquakes. You might choose to help some of these people in their rebuilding, or you might choose to help people as far away as Malawi in the drought-stricken regions of Africa.

However, before we rush in with our own ideas of how to fix things, we must listen to the voices of those directly impacted by these situations. As you consider the following suggestions from Flint's Woodside Church on how to help, please feel free to adapt them to any number of situations:

- Instead of trying to send bottled water, send donations of money that people on the ground in those situations can use to procure safe water.
- Where it is possible for you, volunteer to distribute water around vulnerable neighborhoods.
- Show up at public demonstrations in solidarity with those who are experiencing water crises.
- Read, learn and share information. Discern how you can be a part of a gospel-centered response.
- Don't always assume you know how to help. Most of the time, people know their own needs better than we do.

- Consider the difference between justice and charity. Charity is about donations (like water and money), but justice is about building relationships, hearing the voices from the community, and changing the systems that got us into this in the first place.
- Advocate. Make sure resources are distributed to those enduring the most hardship first. Use your political voice to vote against policies that redistribute resources from inner city areas to more affluent suburbs. Advocate for infrastructures that enable people to help themselves. Advocate for measures that will encourage environmental responsibility.

*Let all who thirst,
Let them come, let them come to the water.*

Beloved community, we have been taught to care for each other after the example of Jesus. Instead of giving in to the categories with which people usually divide themselves and their communities, Jesus draws the woman into a new relationship and into a community that provides for each other's needs. He meets her at the well to co-create a new way of living and being God's people, by offering her living water.

Living water does not value profit over people. Living water does not validate power over relationships. Living water does not obscure the true story in favor of an easy one.

Living water values equity over equality. Living water reinforces the *imago Dei*, encouraging all people to see themselves in the image of the divine. Living water knows that justice is a prerequisite for peace.

*Let all who thirst,
Let them come, let them come to the water.*

— Anita Peebles is a student at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, TN. This sermon was written when the

Flint water crisis was at its peak and has been adapted for this Hunger Emphasis packet, with Anita's collaboration, to include more recent natural disasters as well. Anita asked that we remind our readers that the Flint crisis continues.

Water Prayer

by Guilherme Feitosa de Almeida

When the earth was without form and void
You danced over the waters;
You danced in deep darkness,
Creating.

When the storm raged
You walked on the waters;
You walked on troubled waters
Re-Creating.

When we went to draw water
You brought us together;
You taught us about the living water,
Offering us Your Loving Self.

May we taste the waters and remember Your generosity
In creating a bountiful world.

May we taste the waters and remember Your strength
Instilling in us faith and courage.

May we taste the waters and remember Your love
Calling us out of a lifeless, poisoned drought.

When our energy is spent on that
which doesn't nourish,

When our efforts are spent on that
which doesn't satisfy,

Renew us with Your endless creativity.
Remind us that there is still work, re-creating,
to be done.

Rekindle our focus and dedication
That we may bring to You an offering of justice
and righteousness.

Bless, dear God, the water we drink. Amen.

— Guilherme Almeida, a native of Brazil, is a lecturer in Musical Theater at Baylor University, a Baptist minister specializing in music, a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and a frequent liturgist for Sacred Seasons.

art by Peter Yuichi Clark

Lord, Lead Us to Just Waters

a litany & ritual of commitment

from the World Council of Churches

Editor's note: This litany and ritual are adapted from Churches' Week of Action on Food from the World Council of Churches (WCC). They are taken from Day Two of the resource: "Lord, Lead Us to Just Waters."

The WCC service includes a symbolic intercession and act of commitment, which could be led by youth or young adults. You will need enough water and paper cups for all of the congregants, plus a glass of clean water, a glass of dirty water, a bottle of cola and an empty glass. Display the last four items on the altar table, and place the water and paper cups at or near the altar, or at various stations in your worship area.

For the ritual, congregants will come to the stations, pour cups of water and be prepared to drink them. During the intercession, the leader will hold up the other items as symbols. After this, all will drink from their cups as a symbol of gratitude and commitment.

Litany of Confession and Lament

ONE: God, the source of life, whose spirit hovered over waters at the time of creation; God in Jesus Christ, who came as living waters to quench the thirsty; God the Holy Spirit, who waters and brings forth the fruit; we come to your presence confessing our attitudes of greed, dominance and insensitivity towards your wonderful creation, and particularly towards water.

MANY: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

ONE: We confess that we have been irresponsible in our use of water, wasting it to satisfy our comfortable lives. In many places we have commoditized and privatized water, a natural resource, denying people access to it. In the name of development projects, water sources have been drained or polluted with industrial waste, causing risk to flora and fauna.

MANY: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

ONE: We acknowledge the lack of cooperation between different authorities and organizations to manage water resources fairly. We confess our failure, as faith communities, to address water justice

and seek forgiveness for not speaking out for the thirsty and the dying in situations of drought.

MANY: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

ONE: We confess that we have been silent spectators as many vulnerable communities walk miles every day in search of water for their families. We regret our involvement in the privatization of rivers and other natural waterbeds, resulting in contamination and reduction of water supplies. We come to your presence ashamed of our apathy and insincerity towards the abuse of water and other natural resources, asking you to inspire us to be challenged to conserve, preserve and use water prudently.

MANY: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.



art by Jesse Manning

All: God who brought water out of the rock, God who quenched the thirst of those dying in the wilderness, God who in Jesus gave the living waters so that those who taste them would never thirst, God who in Jesus died on the Cross thirsty, for there was none to quench his thirst, listen to all those who truly confess and grant us forgiveness so that we act responsibly in our use of water, become sensitive to the desperate needs of those without water, and gain wisdom in conserving and preserving water so that rivers roll out in justice among all nations and all peoples. Amen.

Intercession

ONE: Let us pray for the whole universe and hold up every living thing as part of the Beloved Community. (*Holds up the glass of clean water.*) Lord, let this glass of clean water remind us of the available sources of fresh drinking water. Help us to protect the gift of water and utilize it with the spirit of sanctity and responsibility. May our lives be so balanced that greed makes way for need and the tendency to waste makes way for a commitment to save.

MANY: Fountain of life, wash us clean from greed and sin.

ONE: (*Holds up the glass of dirty water.*) Let this glass of unclean water remind us of the tears of those whose lives have been threatened by the pollution of their water resources. Let those who contribute to the contamination of water shed tears of repentance. May we find ways to begin to reverse this process and begin to make our water clean again.

MANY: Creator of new life, transform us so that we may be channels of life to others.

ONE: (*Holds up a bottle of cola.*) God of justice, make us aware that many of our corporations and developmental processes are plundering our natural resources and threatening the livelihood of millions. Show us how to counter these activities. We pray for all organizations involved in the preservation of water, and with it, your gift of life. Help, guide and sustain them in their endeavors.

MANY: God of justice, strengthen those who seek to preserve your creation.

ONE: (*Holds up the empty glass.*) Lord, we pray for all communities involved in the

issues of water justice. Give us compassion to walk with those who lack the water for life sustenance. Help us to empty ourselves of prejudice and fill us with a vision of solidarity and fellowship so that we can work together in conserving the Gift of water.

MANY: God of justice, give us your vision.

Act of Commitment

ONE: (*Holds up the glass of clean water.*) As an act of commitment, let us draw water in the cup, lay our right hand on the full cup of water, and pledge before God in a silent prayer to advocate for water justice in the knowledge of the various lives that depend on water. To partake in the holy fellowship of solidarity, let us drink the water. (*All drink.*)

ONE: Lord, we pray for the universal church and its mission and vision. Inspire us to work towards water justice. Transform our lives so that we may be channels of justice—not just in what we preach, but in our daily practice. Let your churches be role models within our communities in conserving water and preserving life in all its fullness. Bring churches together to work in unity so that justice will prevail and water will be available for our generation and future generations.

MANY: God of hope, make us instruments of hope. Amen.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,

the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

...

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

—Isaiah 35:1-2; 5-7

Living Water in the Wilderness: A Desert Witness

by Larkin Rossiter

The book of Exodus relates a story about the Israelite community as its members wandered in the desert. On their way through the wilderness to the Sinai desert, the people camped at Rephidim. There was no water for them to drink. The text says they quarreled with Moses, saying, "Why did you bring us up from Egypt to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?"

Moses then turned to the Lord for help. And the Lord said to Moses, "I will be standing there before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will issue from it, and the people will drink." (Adapted from Exodus 17:1-7)

Psalms 78 recalls these experiences, saying that Yahweh had performed marvels in spite of the rebellion of the people:

You did wonderful deeds in the sight of their ancestors in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.

You divided the sea and led them through; you made the water stand firm like a wall.

You guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night.

You split the rocks in the desert and gave them water as abundant as the seas; you brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

(Psalms 78: 12-16, Psalms Anew)

I am the Sonoran Desert. Most of me lies in Arizona, USA (United States of America), and Sonora, USM (United States of Mexico). I am dry

most of the year. Travelers who go through me without food, and especially without water, usually die. These are often brown-skinned people fleeing poverty and/or physical abuse.

They walk through my sand on bare feet, attracted to the "American Dream" in el Norte. Many who do not die amid the shade of my mesquite trees are abused along the way or become virtual slaves in the northlands.

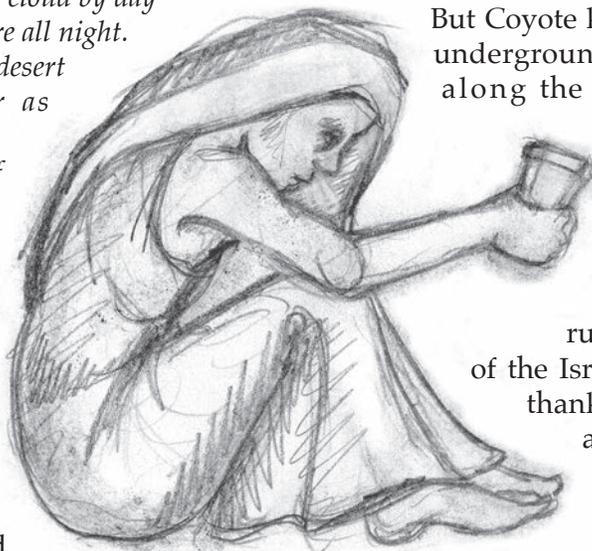
Like the Hebrews at Rephidim, the last station before the Sinai Desert, the migrants ask their Coyote, who knows the way to the promising land, for water. They complain to him. They think he can discern everything about me. Coyote asks, as Moses asks Yahweh in the desert, "Are there divine waters to meet our needs?"

Coyote walks in front of them to the edge of the Santa Cruz River. This is usually only a stream that flows down the middle of my back, but at this time it is bone dry. The rainy season has not started; when that happens, the washes are so full the banks overflow.

But Coyote knows that here the river runs underground, and there are a few wells along the trail. So he utters a prayer, says a blessing, and brings up enough cooling liquid to assuage the migrants' thirst.

This is like the limestone rocks of the Sinai that drip. When they are struck, water runs freely to wet the tongues of the Israelites. Once again, they give thanks, as the Israelites had done after crossing the Sea to escape the Egyptian army.

The heavy iron chariots, manned by armored soldiers, had sunk in the mud under the



art by Sally Lynn Askins

surface that had been dry enough for pedestrians to walk upon with their livestock. It was like Tampa Bay, when Hurricane Irma sucked out the waters before it hit, and then brought back the sea with a vengeance.

Coyote led such a run through the desert and fences, so the Mesoamericans might escape Mexican Federales and USA Border Patrol agents who chased them across me. God provides a way through my hills, where my earth had quaked, splitting open the ground behind them. The pilgrims rejoice in words like those of the psalmist at the successful escape and the drinkable waters before them.

Later, they gaze upon my mountains spread before them. The mountains are surrounded by lights, as if they are on fire. The pilgrims praise God as the Hebrews had done, upon seeing the burning and smoking of the Mountain of God. They regret the times they doubted God and Coyote, as they march between the peaks to the next stop on their journey to a promising new land.

I did not demand the ultimate sacrifice that some pilgrims often give; but unless somebody helps future migrants find water, or leaves gallons in my wilderness for them, that will be the end of too many. Only the Desert People of the Crimson Sunset know the secrets of fluid from the cacti and the flour from the mesquite bean.

I hope the wilderness people and the immigrants survive my dry season and arrive safely to their destinations, as led by their Coyote Moises, to the Mountains of God. And I hope there will be divine waters along the way, gifts

from natives and residents who care about the travelers.

—Larkin Rossitter describes himself as a 25-year border rat who lives in Nogales, AZ. He is a retired United Church of Christ minister and teaches Moral Philosophy at Cochise College. Sources: Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, editors; *The Jewish Study Bible*, second edition; Jewish Publication Society; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014, Nancy Schreck, OSF and Maureen Leach, OSF; *Psalms Anew In Inclusive Language*, Winona, MI: Saint Mary's Press, 1986.

What's the Big Deal about Water?

compiled by Bessie Hilliard

- Across the world, water is scarce because of many different ecological issues, such as the groundwater sinking, as well as human-made reasons, such as pollution and wasting.
- According to the Water Project, 783 million people do not have clean water. In developing countries, as much as 80 percent of illnesses are linked to poor water and sanitation conditions.
- Water is used for transportation, harnessed for electricity, and offers hope for pollution-free energy.
- Weather and climate are centered on water in its various states such as rain, snow, clouds, and humidity.
- Water is a centralized theme that has always dominated developing communities, who base their livelihood upon both the scarcity and abundance of this resource.
- Urban populations are growing and water is being routed away from rural populations in order to satisfy the growing numbers in the cities.
- Crops suffer because water is being redirected into urban areas. This hurts the food supply and the people in the urban areas begin to suffer as well.
- Globally, water is being privatized and taken over by major corporations who are putting a price on this precious resource. This means that poor people are having a difficult time gaining access to water.
- Water is necessary for all living things. It's a human right and a public good.

—The above is updated from a list compiled by Bessie Hilliard for Hunger News & Hope. Bessie is a former Seeds of Hope intern. At this writing, she worked for a sustainable agriculture project in Utah.

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

We have to make an option for the poor of the world, for those immense majorities of the human species who are exploited and decimated by a small majority of the same species. The challenge is to make people see one another as members of a great earthly family together with other species and find their way back to the community of other living beings, the planetary and cosmic community. Finally, we have to find a way of guaranteeing the sustainability, not of one type of development, but of the planet itself, in the short, medium and long term. This requires as a non-consumerist sort of cultural practice, one that respects the rhythms of ecosystems, that produces an economy of sufficiency for all and delivers the common good not only to human beings but also to the other beings in creation.

—Leonardo Boff, *Liberation Theology and Ecology*

When we meet together to break and share bread, where all kneel side by side and receive—as it were—of the same loaf, then we are acting out in miniature what God desires for his creation. It is, in its own small and local way, a fleeting but true foretaste of the longed-for universality of the Kingdom. Moreover, we are taking the products of the earth and doing with them what is intended; offering them back to their Creator thankfully, and sharing them equally. Each Eucharist, whatever else it may be, is a sign of our desire to redress the balance.

—Michael Mayne, *The Enduring Melody*

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations. Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect. Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows. Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken. Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly. So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color. Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our

selfishness, so that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors. And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors. Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty. And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.

—Rabbi Harold Kushner

Our task is enormous: to co-create with God. To look at all that has gone before us, and to recognize that each one of us, however small, has a unique task in co-creation—a unique contribution to make in the world and to humanity—to recognize that by our very existence, we are related to all things; to the caterpillar, the sod, the animals, the birds, to every man and woman. We are part of an interconnected, interrelated cosmos. We cannot amputate ourselves from the rest of God's unfolding universe. We must come to discover the part we have to play in it.

—Edwina Gateley



art by Sally Lynn Askins

The Sacred Act of Eating

a communion sermon

by Laura Mayo

I was one of those exercises that shoves privilege in your face. I was at the annual meeting of the Alliance of Baptists, in a small Sunday school room, learning about the National Farmworkers Ministry. The leader of the group asked us to stand in a line, shoulder to shoulder, holding hands. We were told that the goal of the exercise was to reach the front of the room and to not break our hold to one another's hands.

*Perhaps we feel responsible,
perhaps we feel guilty, perhaps
we do what we feel we can
but we don't actually expect
anything to change.*

Then we were given orders like: "Take one step back if you have ever used food stamps" and "Take one step back if you have ever had to choose between buying food and paying for other basic needs." There were also opportunities for moving forward like: "Take one step forward if no one has ever ridiculed you for your race, your sexuality or any other attribute of your personhood."

It was not long before only a handful of us were in the back of the room.

After the breakout, several of my Alliance friends, who have only known me as a grown-up, asked what I was doing in the back of the room. After a couple of sentences about an early childhood involving free school lunch and Food Stamps, there were no more questions.

The truth is almost all of us are, at most, two generations away from food scarcity. Worldwide, 767 million people still live in extreme poverty—on less than the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day. According to new figures from the World Food Programme, the number of food-

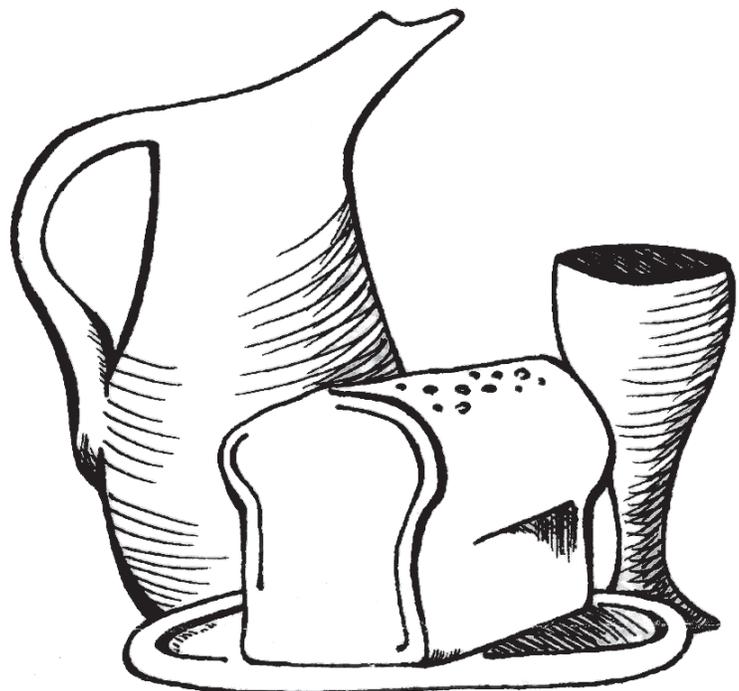
insecure people recently rose, for the first time in several years, to 815 million.

Here in the United States, some 41 million are food-insecure, and most of them are children.

Our food system, as it exists today, allows millions to go without food in a world where others have far more than they need, largely—although not entirely—because good, wholesome, nutritious food is either not available or not affordable.

In *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* by Norman Wirzba, a professor of theology, economy and rural life at Duke Divinity School, Wirzba talks about food as something that is meant to join us together, intimately and intricately with other people, but also with the entire natural world. The very act of eating, he says, is an act of communion with all of life and with God.

Communion is a ritual of re-mem-bering, of recalling our connections not only to one another, but to our food and those who gave their labor and their lives that we might eat. When we think of it in



art by Erin Kennedy Mayer

those terms, communion can be a very relevant and powerful act that brings us back into community in the fullest sense of the word.

When we allow ourselves to be brought back into community and to see anew the connections through which we are bound to one another, we also open ourselves to the injustice, inequality, pain and poverty in our community—in our world.

But it is not like we have never been open to the problems of poverty, of hunger, of human vulnerability. We learned about the poor as children: some of us because we were poor and some of us from stories from the Bible and what we saw in our community.

The Bible has a lot to say about bread and almost all of what it says relates to giving it to the poor.

If we were among those learning about poverty second-hand, our education likely came with some guilt. There are poor people and God needs our help to feed them. If we were not in a church when we learned these lessons, we were still likely handed the issue of poverty and told we needed to fix it.

Perhaps we feel responsible, perhaps we feel guilty, perhaps we do what we feel we can but we don't actually expect anything to change. Poverty is desperate. The experience of the poor as a disembodied other and our experience of giving as buying our right to lay aside our guilt—it is all desperate.

And it must change. When we celebrate communion, we join people in churches around the world in the act of eating. The Bible has a lot to say about bread and almost all of what it says relates to giving it to the poor. The Bible is very clear about our obligation to the poor, the widow, the outcast. And the message is continuous. It's in the Torah; it's in the Prophets and Psalms; it's in the Gospels; it's in the Epistles.

And when the treatment of the poor, widows and outcasts comes up, there is a complete lack of caveats; nowhere do we get an add on like "...once a year" or "...when you feel you can" or "...if they're doing something to help themselves."

We have plenty of reasons why we can't go out and feed the hungry, why we must turn away the needy borrower—and they're not even bad reasons.

We are not bad for having reasons why we can't. What we must do is find ways we can.

In the book of Exodus we find the story of the Hebrew people wandering in the desert. They were hungry. The story says that God sent manna from heaven. The manna was only concerned with one day. The manna would not keep.

The manna was not worried about mañana. But we are. And we should be. There are many praying for bread from heaven while their bellies stay empty. There are many working as hard as they can—working multiple jobs in an effort to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. It's hard to know what to do. It's hard to know how to help.

When you have finished paying the complete tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and the widow, that they may eat in your towns, and be satisfied. Deut. 26:12.

I'm thinking of the ways we, as individuals and as a community—can work for justice, can work for equality, can feed the hungry. We can change our own habits of eating, our habits of consumption, in general, perhaps. We can, for instance, eat less processed, more local, more sustainably grown foods in order to use fewer of the world's resources to feed ourselves.

We can volunteer in a community garden. We can volunteer for local agencies that help bring food to people. We can provide meals for shelters. With help from Bread for the World, we can write letters to our elected officials, calling for action and change. We can start a church food collection on communion Sundays. We can keep energy bars in the car to give to people on the street.

We can participate in a micro-loan. Have you visited KIVA.org? It is one of a number of organizations that promote micro-lending. You can add your \$25 to the \$25 of others to fund a loan for a small business owner. In this way, a goat herder in Africa, for example, can buy more goats, increase his profits and send his children to school. A seamstress in India can buy more cloth...you get the idea.

Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. Lev.19:19.

So much of the system that involves farming and food is broken. Perhaps you and I are not going to fix the entire system but we can work for justice and equality. We can feed the hungry.

At Camp Community, the children of our church raised enough money to help dig a well so that

When the treatment of the poor, widows and outcasts comes up in the Bible, there is a complete lack of caveats. Nowhere do we get an add-on like "once a year" or "when you feel you can" or "if they're doing something to help themselves."

people can have clean water. We did this through Church World Service. We have the opportunity to continue our partnership with Church World Service by using our feet at the annual CROP Hunger Walk.

This year, Church World Service expects the CROP Hunger Walks will share almost \$3 million with food banks, pantries, community gardens and other local efforts across the United States.

Church World Service serves in places devastated by hurricanes along the Texas coast, around Florida and the Caribbean islands, places torn apart by

earthquakes in Mexico, and all around the world where natural disasters hit.

CROP Hunger Walks also help to provide food and water, as well as resources that empower people to meet their own needs. From seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and micro-enterprise loans, the key is people working together to identify their own development priorities, their strengths and their needs.

And that's just it, isn't it? Dignity. Seeds and tools and loans and bread for someone who is hungry. We can help by listening to the stories of people and then engaging with them in ways that validate their humanity and our own. This is the realm of God, a realm of equals.

Let the man with two tunics share with him who has none, and let him who has food do likewise.
Luke 3:11.

Today we share, in communion, some food that is sustaining for impoverished people in several places. These simple provisions will be the embodiment of our prayer for the poor. In this ritual of re-membering, of recalling our connections, not only to one another, but to our food, may we renew our commitment to work for equality and justice.

Amen.

—Laura Mayo is pastor of Covenant Baptist Church in Houston, TX, where the congregation, at this writing, is working hard in the community to help its neighbors rebuild their lives in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.

A Table Ritual

by Katie Cook

This table ritual is designed to go with Laura Mayo's communion sermon, "The Sacred Act of Eating," on pages 15-17. You will need at least four tables and four speakers to invite people to their tables. During communion, your speakers will ask the congregants to choose one of the tables and go there for the elements.

This could be as simple or as elaborate as you want. You could decorate the tables with artifacts or maps from the country or region represented, using some form of bread and drink that is traditionally consumed there, in dishes like ones that would be used there. For the Somalia table you could cover the table in a batik cloth and serve fried bread and dark,

sweet hot tea (or water) in carved wooden dishes. You could drape the Mexico table in a bright serape and serve tortillas and coffee (or water). You could drape the Haitian table in a turquoise cloth and serve baguettes and dark roast, slightly sweet coffee (or water). You could cover the Kentucky table with a gingham cloth and serve cornbread with iced tea.

If you enjoy getting your congregation involved in creative efforts, appoint a couple of people or a committee for each table, and turn them loose to do research on each area represented. If your church has a relationship with a church or ministry in another area of the world where there is hunger, replace one of these regions with that.

You might also want to include a fifth table that represents impoverished people in your own community. If you do that, you could place one table in the middle of your worship area (where the altar table would be) and one in each corner.

Invitation to the Table

FIRST SPEAKER: I am a farmer in Somalia. We have been in the midst of a famine since last winter. We have had no rain, so the crops have been very bad for the past several years. They say that much of the country is turning into a desert because of global climate change. This is made worse by the brutal civil war that has been ripping my country apart for more than 20 years. Many people have died. Vicious extremist groups have sometimes killed people from other parts of the world who tried to bring us food, and they have killed some of my people for taking the food from other countries. As you come to the table, please remember my people in your prayers and your hearts.

SECOND SPEAKER: I live in the southernmost Mexican state of Chiapas, in the mountains. There is much poverty here, and life is difficult for indigenous people, many of whom are Mayan. There was an earthquake near my village a few weeks ago, and many of our people lost our homes. The people who were not affected by the earthquake are using their very limited resources to help those who were. Not long after our earthquake, there was another one in Mexico City, even worse than ours. When you come to the table, remember the people of Mexico as we try to rebuild our communities.

THIRD SPEAKER: I live in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. My country has known poverty for a very long time. We have suffered from colonial oppression, oppression from our own people, international embargoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and floods. It seems that we barely catch our breath from one disaster before another one occurs. As you come to the table, remember us as we struggle to overcome centuries of hardship, as we work until all of us have enough food.

FOURTH SPEAKER: I am 80 years old. I live alone in the house in Eastern Kentucky where I was born, and where I lived with my husband until he died. We have always been farmers, and we grew our own food. But now I'm too weak to plant anything, and all my friends have died or moved away. I'm lonely, and I don't know where my next meal is going to come from. I sometimes think the world outside has forgotten people like me, or that you don't care. As you come to the table, please remember me.

ALL SPEAKERS: Jesus Christ invites you now, with us, to come to the table in the sacred act of eating together.

As the congregation moves toward the tables, you might consider playing instrumental versions of the following:

“Break Thou the Bread of Life” (BREAD OF LIFE)

“Let Us Break Bread Together” (LET US BREAK BREAD).

“Bread of the World” (EUCCHARISTIC HYMN)

“Eat This Bread” (BERTHIER)

—From the Seeds liturgical team



art by Peter Yuichi Clark

To eat this particular meal together is to meet at the level of our most basic humanness, which involves our need not just for food but for each other. I need you to help fill my emptiness just as you need me to help fill yours. As for the emptiness that's still left over, well, we're in it together, or it in us. Maybe it's the most of what makes us human and makes us brothers and sisters.

—Frederick Buechner

Facts about Hunger

compiled by Rachel Boyle

Hunger Around the World

At least 17 million children suffer from malnutrition's most extreme form—severe acute malnutrition. Severe acute malnutrition is the direct cause of death for about one million children every year.

—Action Against Hunger

One in eight people worldwide don't get enough food to eat.

—Action Against Hunger

Sixty percent of the world's hungry are women and girls.

—Mercy Corps

Sixty-five percent of the world's hungry live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia.

—Oxfam Canada

Although there has been a 41-percent reduction in the world's stunting rate since 1990, today rural children are twice as likely to be stunted as urban children.

—UNICEF

The proportion of all stunted children that live in low- and lower-middle-income countries has gone from seven in 10 in 1990 to nine in 10 in 2015. That's a 20 percent increase.

—UNICEF

Malnourished mothers are more likely to give birth to underweight babies, who are then 20 percent more likely to die before the age of five.

—World Food Programme

Women make up 43 percent of farmers in developing countries. Closing the gender gap could increase agricultural production by 2.5 to 4 percent and reduce the number of hungry people by 12-17 percent.

—The Hunger Project

Yields for women farmers are 20 to 30 percent lower than for men, due to a lack of access to improved seeds and equipment. Giving women farmers more resources could decrease the number of hungry people in the world by 100-150 million.

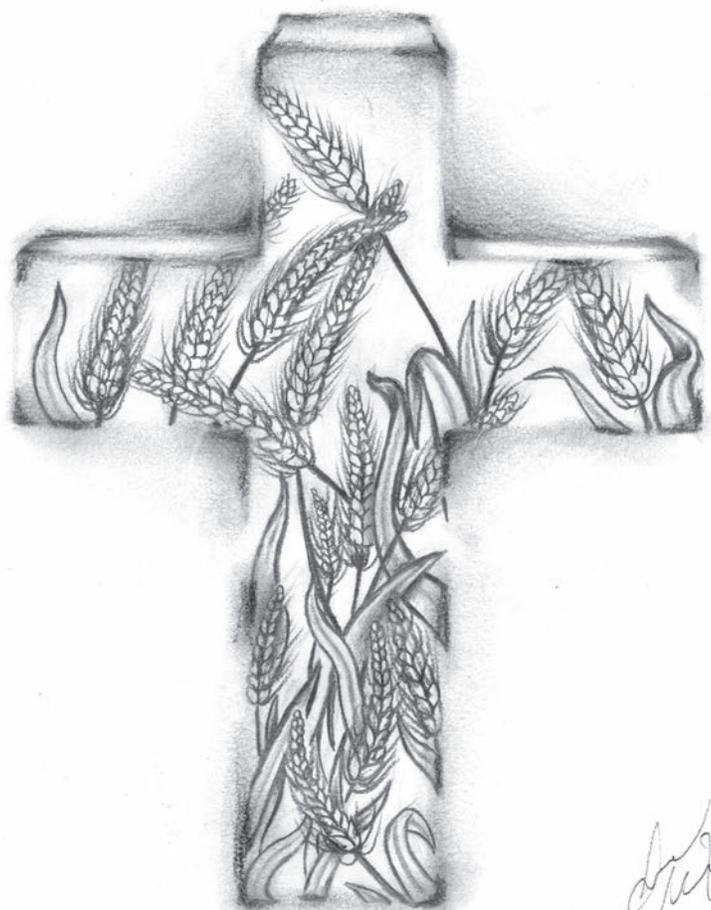
—World Food Programme

By 2015, the 1990 global mortality rate for children under five was reduced by 53 percent. Despite this, 16,000 children under the age of five died every day; 11 children under five died every minute.

—UNICEF

The under-five mortality risk is 1.9 times higher for the poor than for the rich, and 1.7 times higher for rural children than for urban children.

—UNICEF



art by Jesse Manning

Half of all deaths of children under the age of five are attributable to undernutrition.

—The Hunger Project

Around half of all pregnant women in developing countries are anemic. This causes around 110,000 deaths during childbirth each year.

—World Food Programme

Iron deficiency is the most common form of anemia.

—Healthline

Heme iron is the most bioavailable form of iron and is only found in meat. Non-heme iron is found in plant-based foods and is not as easily absorbed.

—Medical News Today

In 2015, the food consumption of meat per capita in developing countries was 31.6 kilograms. In industrial countries, it was 95.7 kilograms.

—Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Research has shown that educating women has contributed 43 percent of the reduction in child malnutrition over time, while food availability accounted for 26 percent.

—World Food Programme

When mothers are educated, they are better able to provide better nutrition and secure access to better healthcare for their children. If all mothers achieved secondary education, there would be 2.8 million fewer deaths of children under the age of five in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

—The Hunger Project

Research confirms that, in the hands of women, an increase in family income improves children's health and nutrition.

—World Food Programme

Evidence shows that school meal programs significantly improve girls' school enrollment and attendance rates. In India, girls involved in the School Meals Programme have a 30 percent higher chance of completing primary school.

—World Food Programme

Hunger in the US

In the United States, more than 13 million children face hunger.

—Feeding America

20 percent of children in households at risk of hunger rely exclusively on charitable organizations to make ends meet.

—Feeding America

In 2014, the US threw away 141 trillion calories' worth of food, which translates to 1,249 calories per person per day.

—National Public Radio

Used properly, a cash gift to a food pantry can have five to 10 times the impact of a food donation of equal value.

—End Hunger in America

In 2015, 42.2 million people lived in food-insecure households.

—United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service

In 2015, the average food insecurity rate in the US was 12.7 percent. For households with children, the average rate was 16.6 percent.

—USDA Economic Research Service

One in five households with children cannot buy enough food for their families.

—Food Research and Action Center

In the US, hunger isn't caused by food scarcity, but by poverty. Some 51.4 percent of Americans will live in poverty at some point before age 65.

—Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry

According to the Root Cause Coalition, the annual costs of hunger to the US health care system are \$130.5 billion.

—Food Research and Action Center

Recent census data shows that SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) lifted 4.6 million people out of poverty in 2015.

—Food Research and Action Center

USDA research shows that each \$5 of SNAP benefits generates nearly twice that in economic activity.

—Food Research and Action Center

Global & US Water Facts

compiled by Rachel Boyle

In low- and middle-income countries, lack of access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities result in a thousand deaths of children under five every day.

—The Hunger Project

Every 90 seconds a child dies from a water-related disease. The third leading cause of child death is diarrhea, a majority of which is water-related.

—Water.org

More than five percent of all child deaths can be prevented with safe water and sanitation.

—Action Against Hunger

One million people are killed by water-, sanitation- and hygiene-related diseases each year.

—Water.org

Globally, at least two billion people use a drinking water source that is contaminated. Contaminated water can transmit diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio. Contaminated water causes over half a million deaths due to diarrhea each year.

—World Health Organization

In 2015, one in 10 people, or 663 million, were without access to improved drinking water sources. Nearly half were in Sub-Saharan Africa.

—UNICEF

In 2015, one in three people, or 2.4 billion, lacked improved sanitation. 82 percent lived in rural areas.

—UNICEF

More people have a mobile phone than have a toilet.

—Water.org

Almost two in three people who need safe drinking water survive on less than \$2 per day.

—Do Something

Between 1990 and 2012, 2.3 billion people gained access to an improved drinking water source.

—Action Against Hunger

Women and children are often responsible for finding and carrying water, which takes time away from work, school and caring for family. Reductions in time spent collecting water have been found to increase school attendance.

—Water.org

One in three schools lacks access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

—Water.org

In low- and middle-income countries, 38 percent of health care facilities lack an improved water source, 19 percent lack improved sanitation, and 35 percent lack water and soap for handwashing.

—World Health Organization

Universal access to safe water and sanitation would translate into \$32 billion in economic benefits each year from reductions in health-care costs.

—Water.org

By 2025, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas.

—World Health Organization

Americans now use 127 percent more water than in 1950, and about 95 percent of that water goes down the drain.

—Do Something



Facts about Earth Care

compiled by Rachel Boyle

Environmental Facts

In 2013, a review of more than 4,000 research papers found that 97 percent of the papers and 98 percent of the authors agreed that humans cause global warming.

—*National Geographic*

In the last 200 years, humans have added 2.3 trillion tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. Half of that was added only in the last 30-35 years.

—The World Counts

The number of natural disasters around the globe (90 percent of them weather-related) has doubled in the past few decades.

—Environmental Defense Fund

Climate change can be tied to increased allergies, asthma, and infectious disease outbreaks, due to increased growth of pollen-producing ragweed, higher levels of air pollution and spreading conditions favorable to pathogens and mosquitos.

—Natural Resources Defense Council

Sixteen of the 17 warmest years on record out of 134 have occurred since 2001. As of early 2017, 2016 was the warmest year on record, with eight of the 12 months being the warmest on record for those respective months.

—National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA)

2016 was the third year in a row with record-setting earth surface temperatures.

—Conservation International

The US makes up 4 percent of the world's population, but produces 16 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. While China now produces the most global-warming pollution

at about 28 percent, the US has still produced the most by far in cumulative emissions over the past 150 years.

—Natural Resources Defense Council

Eleven percent of all global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans are due to deforestation; this is comparable to the emissions produced by all of the cars and trucks on Earth.

—Conservation International

Greenland lost 150 to 250 cubic kilometers of ice per year between 2002 and 2006; Antarctica lost about



152 cubic kilometers between 2002 and 2005.

—NASA

In 1910, Glacier National Park had an estimated 150 glaciers. As of December 2016, it had 25.

—National Wildlife Federation

According to a 2016 study, every ton of carbon dioxide emitted melts 32 square feet of Arctic ice. This means that the average American melts 525 square feet per year.

—*National Geographic*

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30 percent. The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the upper layer of the oceans is increasing by about 2 billion tons per year.

—NASA

Rising sea levels increase the risk of coastal flooding, and could cause population displacement for the more than half of the world's population that lives within 60 kilometers of shorelines. Floods can directly cause injury and death, and increase risks of infection from water and vector-borne diseases.

—World Health Organization

More variable rainfall patterns are likely to compromise the supply of fresh water. Globally, water scarcity already affects four out of 10 people. More variable rainfalls and increasing temperatures are also expected to reduce crop yields in many tropical developing nations, where food security is already a problem.

—World Health Organization



But There's Some Good News, Too:

In 2016, scientists at MIT identified evidence of the Antarctic ozone layer healing from the damage of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) released in the 1970s and 1980s. The research team found that the September ozone hole has shrunk by more than 4 million square kilometers, about half the area of the contiguous United States, since 2000.

—MIT (*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*) News

Solar power is currently at least as cheap as coal in Germany, Australia, the US, Spain and Italy, and it's predicted to get even cheaper. By 2021, it will be cheaper than coal in China, India, Mexico, the UK and Brazil as well.

—Bloomberg New Energy Finance

In the US, solar power employs almost twice as many people as coal, oil, and natural gas combined: solar power claims 43 percent of the Electric Power Generation workforce, while coal, oil, and natural gas together employ 22 percent.

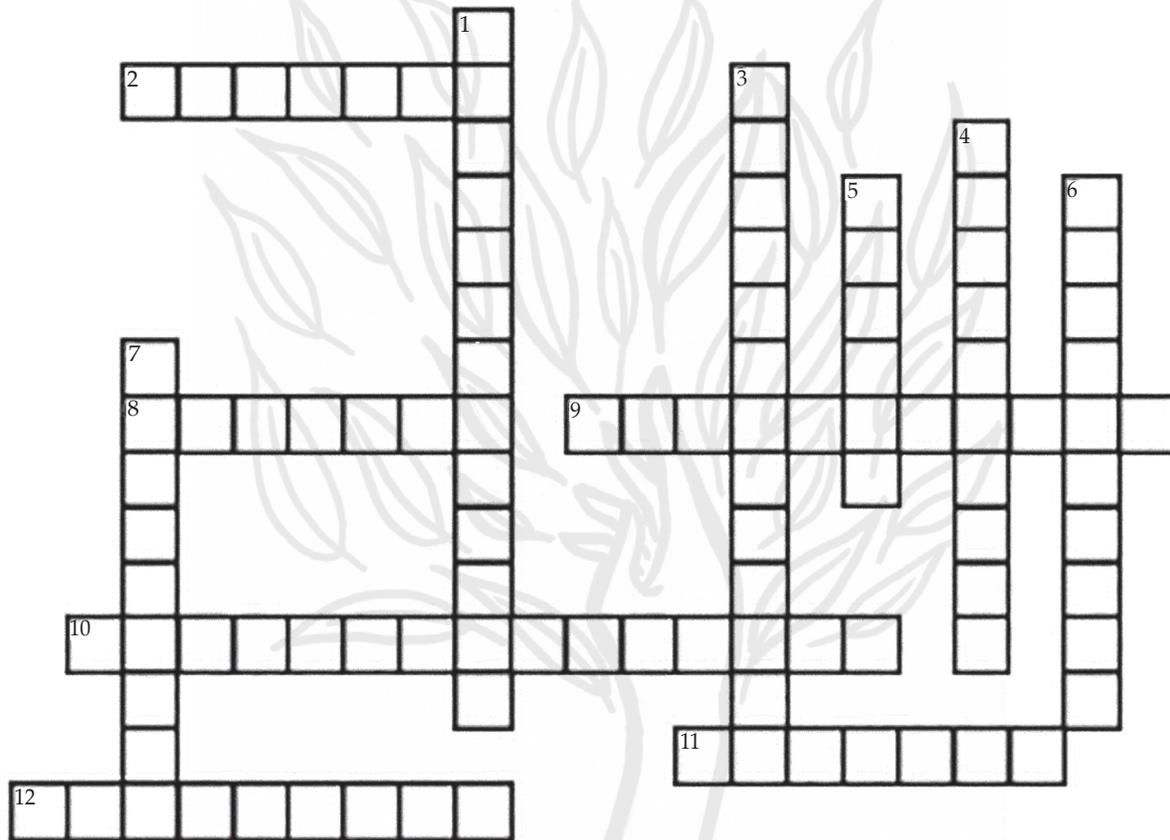
—US Energy and Employment Report, January 2017

In 2016, then President Barack Obama more than quadrupled the size of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, established in 2006 by former President George W. Bush. The monument is a haven for endangered species, including blue whales and sea turtles, and a quarter of the creatures living there are found nowhere else. At 582,578 square miles, it is now larger than all the national parks combined, and is the largest protected area on the planet.

—*National Geographic*

Earth Care Crossword

compiled by Rachel Boyle



For crossword answers, write to seedseditor1@gmail.com.

ACROSS

- 2 The average weather conditions of a place over a long period of time
8 When a plant or animal species dies out, it becomes this
9 The state hosting America's first offshore wind farm
10 A measure of the total amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere each year by any person, appliance, building, etc.
11 This European country generated 140 percent of its national electricity needs from wind turbines on an unusually windy day in 2015
12 Coral ___ is the process by which coral colonies under environmental stress expel their microscopic symbiotic algae and appear whitened

DOWN

- 1 The cause of 11 percent of all global greenhouse gas emissions
3 The primary greenhouse gas emitted by human activities, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency
4 This belt of naturally-occurring gas in Earth's atmosphere typically protects against ultraviolet radiation, but has been damaged since the 1980s, particularly over the Antarctic
5 Coal, oil and natural gas are ___ fuels
6 The ___ effect refers to rising global temperatures caused by gases in Earth's atmosphere trapping more heat radiated by the sun
7 Solar and wind are two forms of this type of energy

Earth Care Word Search

compiled by Rachel Boyle

M P L R X V A A R K I D G Y K
E R Y G R E N E P H E N L L R
O Q B I E B R F H P J I O A G
T N Y I R R N B Y H A W B M V
U O Y B O Y W K D Z T E A R G
A I D E W F L I R L R F L E Y
R T E K E N U L O W E J W H W
B A R Y T W Z E E Y C E A T L
A V E R A S S K L V Y M R O X
E R G W S I D R E H C F M E Y
S E N S X I A Y C J L O I G X
J S A I Y L O G T N E N N S R
R N D K O M Q Q R N D Z G B Q
C O N S A P Y T I C R A C S N
N C E J E D B F C A A Q P B P

☞ SOLAR

☞ WIND

☞ HYDROELECTRIC

☞ GEOTHERMAL

☞ ENDANGERED

☞ ENERGY

☞ CONSERVATION

☞ GLOBAL WARMING

☞ BIOFUEL

☞ RECYCLE

☞ SCARCITY

—Rachel Boyle, a native of Grapevine, TX, is a Professional Writing major at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern.

Benediction

Let us go now, into all the earth

and set loose the waters of justice.

Let us go into this drought-stricken,
disaster-ridden, toxic planet
with a word of hope for those
who hunger and thirst.

Let us become caregivers for Mother Earth,
our Sister,

like we never have been before.

Let us take good news into the world
for all of God's creatures.

As we go,

May God open the windows of heaven
and send healing waters onto our blighted
landscapes.

May the Holy Spirit brood upon the face
of the deep,

Birthing a new hope for God's creation.

May God help us to change the bitterness
of our water

into everlasting sweetness.

May God transform our deserts
into bountiful gardens.

May God quench our thirst for living water

May we, co-creators with God,
fill the earth once again with abundance.

Amen.

—Katie Cook