

A Liturgy for Food and Farming



Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

GATHERING

Welcome

Christians follow a Master who was known for eating with others, recognised for his distinctive way of giving thanks for food, and who asked to be remembered in bread and wine.

Following in his steps we give thanks for our food; following in the steps of the prophets and teachers of Israel we oppose injustice in its production; and we look for a world where every family dwells under its vine and fig tree, where needs can be met without greed, and in a spirit of solidarity and sharing.

Opening Responses

Leader: All creatures look to you in hope, O God, and you give them food in due season.

Leader: Come now all who thirst

ALL: And drink the water of life.

Leader: Come now all who hunger

ALL: And be filled with good things.

Leader: Come now all who labour

ALL: And you shall find rest.

Song

“Inspired by love and anger” (Tune: ‘Sally Gardens. Irish Trad)

Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain, informed of God’s own bias, we ask him once again:
‘How long must some folk suffer? How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-interest turn prayer and pity blind’

From those forever victims of heartless human greed, their cruel plight composes a litany of need:
‘Where are the fruits of justice? Where are the signs of peace?
When is the day when prisoners and dreams find their release?’

From those forever shackled to what their wealth can buy, the fear of lost advantage provokes the bitter cry,
‘Don’t query our position! Don’t criticize our wealth!
Don’t mention those exploited by politics and stealth!’

To God who through the prophets proclaimed a different age, We offer earth’s indifference, its agony and rage:
‘When will the wrongs be righted? When will the kingdom come?
When will the world be generous to all instead of some?’

God asks, ‘Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?
And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?
And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?
And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?’

Amused in someone’s kitchen, asleep in someone’s boat, Attuned to what the ancients exposed, proclaimed and wrote, A saviour without safety, a tradesman without tools Has come to tip the balance with fishermen and fools.

Confession

Leader: We recall what food means in an unjust world. We remember that one sixth of the world's population goes hungry each day. We remember the thousands of children who die each day for lack of access to clean water. We remember the labourers, women and men, denied a living wage. We remember the farmers in our own country forced, by the operations of 'the market', to sell their produce for less than the cost of production. We remember that, whether we choose to or not, we live at their expense. We acknowledge that we have demanded cheap food and forgotten the price paid in unsustainable ways of farming and fishing, threatening the welfare of others and the very future of coming generations.

We ask for God's forgiveness and for the renewal of the Holy Spirit

Silence

Leader: Before God, with the people of God,
I confess to my brokenness:
to the carelessness with which I buy and eat and produce my food;
I confess to the ways I wound my life,
the lives of others,
and the life of the world.

**ALL: May God forgive you, Christ renew you,
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.**

Leader: Amen

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ALL: Amen

WORD

Suggestions for suitable readings from the Hebrew bible include: Leviticus 25 14-28; Genesis 41 17-37; Deuteronomy 14 22,28-9; Is 58 1-9

Psalms 104 (read responsively)

Lord, you have made so many things!
How wisely you have made them all! The earth is full of your creatures
There is the ocean, large and wide, where countless creatures live;
Large and small alike.

The ships sail on it, and in it plays Leviathan,
The sea monster you made for the sport of it.
All of them depend on you
To give them food when they need it.
You give it to them; and they eat it
You open your hand and they are satisfied.
When you turn away, they are afraid;
When you take away their breath, they die and return to dust.
But when you give them your Spirit, they are created;
You give new life to the earth.
May the glory of the Lord last forever!
May the Lord rejoice in all he has made"
For the Lord looks at the earth and it trembles
And touches the mountains and they pour out smoke.
I will sing to the Lord all my life
I will praise God as long as I live.
May God be pleased with my song
For my joy comes from the Lord.

Suggestions for suitable readings from the Messianic writings include: John 6: 25-36; John 6: 1-13
(and Synoptic parallels); 2 Corinthians 8: 1-15

Leader: For the Word of God in Scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us

ALL: Thanks be to God

Reflection on the word

RESPONSE

Affirmation of faith

We believe in God,
whose love is the source of all life
and the desire of our lives
whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth
whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all
and whose love, defeating even death,
is our glorious promise of freedom.
Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt,
we trust in that love: and in the name of Jesus Christ,
we commit ourselves, in the service of others,
to seek justice in food and farming as in all things,
to live in peace, to care for the earth,

and to see that the hungry are fed
to live in the freedom of forgiveness
and in the power of the Spirit of love,
and in the company of all the faithful
past, present, and yet to come,
so to be the Church, for the glory of God. Amen.

Prayers of concern

Leader: We bring before God the needs of the world
For the hungry

ALL: That they may be fed

For daily bread

ALL: Teach us to be thankful

For those who produce food

ALL: That they may live in peace and justice

For those who speculate in food

ALL: That they may repent

For those who corner land and resources

ALL: That they may repent

For scientists who work to improve seed and stock

ALL: That they may have wisdom

For all God's people

ALL: That we may know that the earth and sea are the Lord's

For all God's people

ALL: That we may eat with gratitude

For all God's people

ALL: That we may share the blessings of the earth and seas with others

ALL: Make us worthy, Lord, to serve

The men, women and children throughout the world

Who live and die in poverty and hunger.

Give them, through our hands,

This day their daily bread,

And by our understanding and love,

Give peace and joy. Amen

OR: God of our future and our present,

Help us to enable

Life's great feast to happen here and now,

To open hearts and hands, baskets and pockets;

To share bread with our neighbours

To share peace with our neighbours,

So that in the most ordinary of miracles

All are fed. Amen

[Joy Mead, adapted; Holy Ground, ed. Paynter and Boothroyd, Wild Goose Publications, 2005:
p.80]

The Lord's prayer

Song

"Enemy of apathy"

She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,
Hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
She sighs and she sings, mothering creation,
Waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.

She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,
Lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;
She nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,
Nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.

She dances in fire, startling her spectators,
Waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;
She weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,
Nor can she be captured, silenced or restrained.

For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
Gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
She is the key opening the scriptures,
Enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

Closing responses

Leader: Christ has come to proclaim God's kingdom:
Women: to feed the hungry
Men: to give sight to the blind,
Women: to strengthen the weary,
Men: to set the prisoners free
Leader: May God who created enough for everyone's need
Fill us equally with love and anger

May Christ who shared food with the multitude
Teach us how to share

May the Spirit who makes a new world possible
Help us to make it real.