## **There Is a Great Hunger in Creation**

#### ****A Service for International Day for the Eradication of Poverty****

*For October 17 or the nearest Sunday.*

*Written by Don Uhryniw*

### Prelude

# We Gather in Solidarity with Those in Poverty

### Gathering Dialogue

There is a great hunger in creation,

**a hunger for justice, a thirst for righteousness.**

There is a spiritual poverty that abandons relationships,

**broken community, fractured values, systems of indifference.**

So we are called to be faithful,

**faithful in sharing the abundance that is Creation.**

### Opening Prayer

**Holy One, there are times when loaves and fishes do not satisfy hunger.**

**The emptiness in people’s bellies is not the only hunger that there is.**

**As we crave food so must we crave nurture.**

**Embarrass us into breaking cycles and systems of indifference and disempowerment.**

**In the name of Jesus, your living bread, we pray. Amen.**

### Hymn Suggestions

“Said Judas to Mary” (*Voices United* 129)

“All Who Hunger” (*Voices United* 460)

“God Weeps” (*More Voices* 78)

### Lighting of the Candle of Hope:

(*Speak about the despair and sense of hopelessness that poverty brings to people and communities.*)

### Worship with All God’s Children

(*Discuss:* *What is it like to be a family with no money? How would you eat? Where would you get your clothing and school supplies?*)

### Declaration of Collaboration

**Food of life, we confess that we have not done enough to break the cycle of poverty. We confess that we have not demanded more from ourselves, our communities of faith, our governments. Too often we have put our comfort over the needs of those who are hungry, homeless, hopeless. Give us courage to be the people of faith you have called us to be. Give us the tools to share power, the resources to re-tool structures that oppress, the nurture we need for the journey that awaits us. We ask for the gift of empathy, so that we will not be content offering sympathy.**

# Hearing What the Sacred Writings Have Told Us about Poverty

### Scripture

Deuteronomy 15:7–11; Psalm 23; Revelation 21:1–6; Matthew 14:13–21

### Hymn Suggestions

“When a Poor One” (*Voices United* 702)

“Bread of Life, Broken and Shared” (*More Voices* 197)

### Sermon Starter

In a culture that defines wealth as success, poverty is viewed as a failure. No one is a failure. If anything, all of us have failed to appreciate the depth of poverty—not only on the other side of the world, but also on the other side of the street. We use words and phrases like “Pull up your bootstraps,” “You are lazy,” “You made your bed, now lie in it!” And then we patronizingly add “Offer a hand up rather than a hand out,” assuming that “up” is the right place.

I remember making a presentation to politicians about poverty, and one quipped, “Jesus said you will always have the poor with you.” The passage from Deuteronomy reminds us that, even though there is still poverty, we are called to address it. We are not called to be successful; we are called to be faithful. (Alydia Smith)

### Offering Prayer of Dedication

**Holy One, we know that money alone cannot solve the pain of poverty. We confess that there is a spiritual poverty that can only be overcome by changing people’s minds and changing the systems that disempower many of us. So we offer our treasures and offer up the prayers of our hands and our hearts so that all of your children may live in dignity. In the name of Jesus, himself poor, we make this prayer. Amen.**

# We’ll Go Out and Make a Difference

### Declaration of Re-Creation

**We declare that as friends of Jesus, we will work for a new economic system in which the abundance of creation is shared equally. We declare that we will no longer be passive in seeking the end of poverty. We declare that we will be proactive in seeking, making, and sharing justice for all the children of the Divine. We declare that by our actions people will know that we are friends of Jesus. Amen.**

### Sending Forth

Here, take these five loaves and two fishes

**to feed a hungry world.**

Embrace the richness of the Holy Kin-dom

**for that is where true wealth is.**

Take care of your neighbour.

**We will care for all God’s people.**

### Hymn Suggestions

“Tomorrow Christ Is Coming” (*Voices United* 27)

“My Soul Cries Out” (*More Voices* 120)

“Go, Make a Diff’rence” (*More Voices* 209)

**For additional information on poverty**, see [www.united-church.ca/economic/poverty](http://www.united-church.ca/economic/poverty) and [www.united-church.ca/economic/poverty/children](http://www.united-church.ca/economic/poverty/children).

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