

PLENTY

"Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40



Hunger Awareness (*)

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

STEPS TOWARD MAKING A DIFFERENCE

ADD SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE TO YOUR EVENING MEAL

Make 2 Cents-a-Meal (also known as "Prayers, Pennies, and Persuasion") a family routine. Within your regular devotions, such as saying grace at dinner, imagine increasing your table size and amount of food to include less fortunate others. Read suggested scriptures, discuss reasons and remedies for poverty, and invite everyone (including children) to deposit 2 pennies in a designated container. Get started by taping the enclosed wrapper to a can, place it on your dinner table, and follow the directions.

BECOME A NUISANCE IN YOUR CONGREGATION

Pass on information about hunger issues. Get permission to add inserts (see enclosed possibilities) on hunger in Sunday morning worship folders. Promote "moments for mission" within the liturgy. Share legislative alerts, updates, and announcements about events. Lead a discussion group using the hunger issues booklet. Become designated (or appoint yourself) as "Congregational Contact" for the Hunger Network in your church.

GET (ELECTRONICALLY) CONNECTED

Receive twice monthly HungerNetOhio email messages. Respond to challenges for advocacy. Share them with you family, friends, and neighbors. Sign up: <HungerNetOhio@aol.com>.

INVITE "THE HUNGER CONNECTION" INTO YOUR CHURCH

Arrange for workshops designed to put Christian faith into action to end poverty and hunger and its causes. Explore scriptural directives concerning our call to "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Develop an understanding of the needs and issues—locally and worldwide—while creating action plans for ending hunger for *all God's children*. Contact Karen Henderson (740-344-8826 or kbhenderson1806@msn.com).

CALL AND/OR VISIT LEGISLATORS

Arrange to visit Washington or Columbus to talk with public officials about your convictions. Meet on "Tuesday at the Statehouse." Request the Hunger Network to identify and coordinate advocates in your area to visit together your state senate or house member's local office. Reach Bob Erickson (614.424.6203 or <boerickson@aol.com>) to help set up visits and advise or accompany you.

Hunger Issues Booklets

This year's hunger issues booklet will be ready by August for use in discussion groups during the fall to prepare for the November 4th election. In contrast to previous years, this one will be limitedly distributed. Due to increasing printing and postal costs, it will be primarily available online through our website (<www.HungerNetOhio.org>). Single hard copies must be ordered through the Hunger Network office (614-424-6203; HungerNetOhio.com) and may then be photocopied for group use.

This sixth annual edition, "**Plenty and Scarcity: Hunger and Public Policy, 2008-09**" will focus on two major hunger issues, each asking a central critical question:



Down and Out. "Brother—and sister—can you spare a dime? Or a meal? Or a bag of groceries?"

A widespread pattern is emerging in food pantry of being depleting of supplies. Public commitment is down, grants are drying up, volunteer donations are lessening. Getting Food Stamps is often fraught with bureaucratic obstacles. *How do we best assure that urgent assistance is available to individuals and families without essentials for survival?*

On the Edge. "Help me care of my family."

Countless Ohioans are constantly vulnerable to a sudden health care expense, rise in the heating bill, loss of job or transportation, the next dip in available cash. Everyday life, for them, is a crisis about to happen. *What is our role in helping to prevent or protect the those currently self-sufficient from also becoming "down and out"?*

The booklet will include listings of candidates for public office and suggest questions to determine how they would address increasing hunger and poverty within our state and nation.

(*) Hunger Awareness Day has been sponsored nationally by America's Second Harvest and other organizations (Society of St. Andrews) annually in June, although some are shifting this year to September as "Hunger Awareness Month." Each congregation is encouraged to determine their best time(s) for drawing attention to hunger and recommending alternatives for preventing it. Here are ideas and bulletin inserts for observing it.

Wrap longways around a 16 to 20 oz can, taping ends together. Regularly collected monies are forward to the person at church coordinating the **2 Cents-a-Meal** Program where it will be divided half and half between local ministries and the Hunger Network in Ohio. Additional wrappers may be photocopied or requested by phone or email below.

1. *Deliverance to the needy* (Psalm 72:1-7)
2. *Laying up treasures* (Luke 12:13-21)
3. *Encourage the faint-hearted* (Thessalonian 5:12-18)
4. *God's gift to humankind* (Ecclesiastes 3:1-13)
5. *Workers' wages may differ* (Matthew 20:1-16)
6. *Promise to the poor; equity to the meek* (Isaiah 11:1-10)
7. *God lifts up the downtrodden* (Psalm 147:1-6)
8. *Bear the failings of the weak* (Roman 15:1-6)
9. *Difficulty for rich entering heaven* (Mark 10:17-31)
10. *Life like a watered garden* (Jeremiah 31:10-14)
11. *Sharing in suffering* (II Corinthians 1:3-12)
12. *The poor cried and were heard* (Psalm 34)
13. *Hospitality to strangers* (Hebrews 13:1-3)
14. *Hunger for righteousness* (Matthew 5:1-16)
15. *Having everything in common* (Acts 4:32-37)
16. *Swords into plow shares* (Isaiah 2:1-5)
17. *Associate with the lowly* (Romans 12:9-21)
18. *Water into wine* (John 2:1-11)
19. *A tender heart, humble mind* (I Peter 3:8-12)
20. *He who has no helper* (Psalm 72:12-19)
21. *"Pure religion"* (James 1:27)
22. *Good news for the poor* (Matthew 11:2-11)
23. *Strengthen the feeble knees* (Isaiah 35:1-4)
24. *No room in the inn* (Luke 2:1-7)
25. *To be rich in good deeds* (I Timothy 6:17-19)
26. *He who bears much fruit* (John 15:1-5)
27. *If the Lord wills* (James 4:13-16)
28. *Put on compassion and kindness* (Colossians 3:12-16)
29. *You do not yet understand* (Mark 8:14-21)
30. *Food and righteousness* (Romans 14:13-23)
31. *Count others better than yourselves* (Philippians 2:1-4)

“As you did to the least of these...



...you did to me!”

(Matthew 25:40)

WHAT?

2 Cents-A-Meal is a program within congregations designed to remind us of the poor and needy at mealtimes. It encourages us to collect 2 pennies per person for shared hunger ministries as we give thanks for our own food. It also gives us ways to become involved in changing public policies and conditions tolerating hunger.

WHY?

Most of us rarely spend a day with nothing to eat. Yet hunger is an everyday fact of life for millions of people everywhere. Lack of food and malnutrition is a problem for many of our neighbors--nearby and far away. The question confronting us all is, **“what can we do to make a difference?”**

HOW?

Read the Scripture of the day, using the number of the day of the month. Prayers of thanks are offered for the food shared at this table and concerns are raised for those without food on their tables. 2 cents-a-meal from each person is then placed in the container. During the meal, the Scripture may be discussed along with ideas for helping those in need.

WHO?

The unique mission of the Hunger Network is to end hunger in Ohio. *The special strategies is to change conditions that cause poverty*

For assistance or more information:

Hunger Network in Ohio
82 East 16th Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43201
614.424-6203
www.HungerNetOhio.org
HungerNetOhio@aol.com

ENDING

HUNGER IN OHIO

Facing Facts

- In any given week, 207,700 different Ohioans receive emergency food assistance.
- 35 percent are children under the age of 18, with one out of 10, under 5 years old
- 9% are seniors, often on fixed income and deciding between meals, utilities, and medications
- 1/2 choose between paying for food or heating/utilities and 1/3 between food or rent/mortgages

Understanding the Dilemma

Most of us rarely spend a day with nothing to eat. Yet hunger is an everyday fact of life for an epidemic number of families. Poverty, of course, is largely responsible for hunger and unemployment--and underemployment--is the leading cause of poverty. In recent years, over a quarter of a million jobs have been lost in Ohio. While "welfare reform" is designed to train and move "able bodied" adult into jobs, many are still not able to get employment or earn enough to support their families. Congregations often provide food pantries and occasional handouts to help families to get by, yet solutions to ongoing hunger must include changing root causes of poverty.

Committing to Long-term Remedies

Do Justice...Love Kindness...Walk Humbly"

The mission of the Hunger Network is end hunger in Ohio
The method is to change conditions which cause poverty
The ministry is to advocate for personal compassion
and economic for "the least of these"
our brothers, sisters, and children
in need

Becoming Involved

2 cents-a-Meal: Pray, keep informed, and contribute pennies within your family/church

Congregational Contact Persons: Lead your faith community to action

Legislative District Coordinators: Join with others in your area and work together for justice

Tuesdays at the Statehouse: Visit your legislators either at their state or local offices

Public Policy Email Network: Receive and respond to regular alerts on current issues

HUNGER NETWORK IN OHIO

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Hunger as metaphor; advocacy as “metanoia”

“You feed the hungry.”

A frequent assumption about the Hunger Network. Our name suggests that we are in the business of providing groceries directly to indigent families or, maybe, church pantries.

Although many of our 2000 affiliated congregations sponsor feeding programs, we provide a different and complementary ministry: the Hunger Network is committed to ending hunger in Ohio through changing conditions that cause it. For us, “hunger” is a metaphor for “desperation.” An empty stomach may be the worst, but not the only, ache of severe deprivation. Homelessness and sickness and all sorts economic catastrophes are also poverty’s cries for help.

Stories abound and best reflect the meaning of hunger.

For instance, a random call to a food pantry led to Gary who regularly depends upon handouts. He was a 40-something “breadwinner” husband and father before cancer devastated his body and ability to bring much to the table for his family. He had a good job with a home renovation and maintenance company, but it lacked health coverage, unemployment insurance, and other traditional safety nets to protect him from the harshness of suddenly being unable to work. Receiving medical treatment for the disease, yet his negotiations for Medicaid and SSI have been a “nightmare.” He feels strangled in “red tape,” threatened by litigation, and--with costs for transportation and fighting for essential services--unable to hold onto the little money he can scrape up for food. Surgeries to reduce tumors on his lungs and near heart have left nerve damage. Although promised long-term benefits, he has been seared by radiation and now further scorched and slowed by chemotherapy.

A caption of why the Hunger Network exists could include Gary’s saga along with those multitudes of barely *walking*--and more often *working*--wounded who Jesus described as the “least of these.” Our ministry to these persons means not only assuring their access to emergency food but determining to



find broader and deeper remedies for their particular and often complex forms of desperation.

For advocates of the countless persons similarly caught up in poverty’s undercurrents, a term usually used elsewhere is applicable to this quest. The Greek word “metanoia” is frequently translated in the New Testament as “repent.” But it suggests a more fundamental approach to our usual sense of personal repentance. Break it down: “meta” in Greek literally means “with” and “noia” means understanding.

Much of the work of the Hunger Network involves this approach to legislative change around hunger-related public policy issues. Yet this kind of metanoia is not simply winning votes for a particular point of view or swaying power from one to the other political side within the heated debate. Rather, on behalf of the most vulnerable Ohioans, we try to transform opinions by appealing to a common understanding of the human side of issues. It opens the process of headstrong decision-making to include the *heart* of any matter. Through education and advocacy, we are dedicated to making connections that shed light and correct spiritual, economic, and political conditions that obstruct people from getting what they need and communities from protecting them.

Metanoia is turning around, facing a new direction, and--beyond feeding the hungry--encouraging *deep change* in attitudes and systems that either cause or tolerate hunger in Ohio.

Bob Erickson

The mission of the Hunger Network in Ohio is to end hunger in Ohio and strategy to change condition which cause poverty. Sponsors include the Eastminster Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church USA, the Episcopal Church Dioceses of Ohio and Southern Ohio; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Synods of Northeast and Southern Ohio; and the United Methodist Church West Ohio Conference. Information about hunger issues, training for advocacy, and opportunities to work for economic justice are available. The organization is funded primarily through 2 cents-a-meal contributions and donations.

Would you like more information about hunger or ways to make a difference? Do you need help developing social justice ministries in your congregation? Have you concerns which you would like help exploring?

Contact **Bob Erickson**, Director

Phone 614.424.6203; e-mail <HungerNetOhio@aol.com>; Website: <HungerNetOhio.org>

31-1-08

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Creating Awareness
Seeking Solutions