

the crumbs that fall



Ali Marshall of the Iona Community wrote this worship service, inspired by our campaign to End Hunger (www.endhungeruk.org). It was used at the Greenbelt festival in August 2016.

gather

Call to worship

All you who are thirsty
this is the place for water
All you who are hungry,
this is the place to be fed

Why spend your earnings on what is not food?
Why pay for that which fails to satisfy?

Here, without money
here, without price,
all may enjoy the bread of heaven.

from A Wee Worship Book © Wild Goose Resource Group, published by Wild Goose Resource Publications)

Jesus says, I am the Way for you

and so we come to follow Christ

Jesus says, I am the Truth for you

and so we come to dwell in the light

Jesus says, I am the Life for you

and so we come,

leaving behind all else to which we cling.

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share the word

Gospel

The feast for 5,000 men, plus women and children, is the only miracle that all four gospel writers record, so it must be important. Please turn to the people next to you and recount what you remember of the story.

[Read Mark 6:30–44]

Matthew makes this a stark contrast with the debauched and violent meal in Herod's palace that culminated in John, being beheaded – so Jesus was mourning the death of his cousin at the time. Only John tells us of Andrew finding the little boy with his picnic.

Turn again to the people next to you. Which bits of the story had you forgotten or not heard? Were there any surprises here? What did you miss out? Why might that be? I wonder which bits we miss of the story of our own communities...



Song

'Sing hey for the carpenter' or 'Mungu ni Mwema'

Opening talk

Last year, nearly 2 million people needed food aid in this country. Most people using food banks are resourceful, very careful with money, planning in detail, researching as best they can (often without the internet). Many skip meals themselves so there is something on the table for the children. But they have no resilience if something is beyond their control: a cold snap in spring meaning heating is needed for longer, a growth spurt in a child that means shoes pinch.

People are hungry, children are under-nourished in our neighbourhoods and our communities.

Song

'Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison'

Old Testament

God is generous and gives out of abundance. So how do people get locked into poverty? How did God's people become slaves in Egypt, after first going in search of bread and finding their brother in a place of authority and responsibility there?

[Read the story in Genesis 47 and 48]

Joseph sold back the grain he had taken by taxation when harvests had been good, at a price so high that eventually the people had to sell themselves and become slaves. Not so far from the reality for many people today: clever tax avoidance schemes for some, increasing taxes on the poor.

Helder Camara, the Brazilian Archbishop and liberation theologian, famously said, "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist."

respond to the word

There are signs of hope... Local ventures to create and support sustainable local food economies, not-for-profit shops, local organic veg bags like Locavore in Glasgow, or the woodlands community garden offering free healthy vegetarian food, cookery classes, help to grow, or Real Food Wythenshawe near Manchester that helps the local community to grow and cook their own food.

[Add other examples from your community.]

It does not have to be like this. We can make a difference, we can be change-makers. Church Action on Poverty is launching a campaign to End Hunger in the UK, wanting our government to acknowledge the scale of the problem and the need for urgent action to address it.

[Make materials available for people to take away, or talk about your church's plans to get involved – see www.endhungeruk.org]

As Jesus said in our reading: **You feed them.**

Song

We will take what you offer, we will live by your word.
We will love one another and be led by you, Lord.
By John Bell, from There is One Among Us
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As people leave, offer each an oatcake and suggest they share it with someone who has not been present at worship.



Intercessions

Holy God, though this world depends on your grace,
it is governed and tended by mortals.

So we pray for those who walk the corridors of power in the parliaments
of this and other lands, whose judgements we value or fear.

Through our lives and by our prayers, your kingdom come

We pray for those who hold key positions in the worlds of finance, business
and industry, whose decisions may profit some or impoverish many.

Silence

May they always value people higher than profit;
may they never impose burdens on the poor
which they would not carry themselves;
and may they never divorce money from morality,
or ownership from stewardship.

Through our lives and by our prayers, your kingdom come

We pray for those in the caring professions,

who look after and listen to kind, cruel and cantankerous folk
and for those making decisions regarding the nation's health and welfare.

Silence

May they always sense the sanctity of life,
and every person's uniqueness;

may they help and heal by their interest as well as their skill;
and may they be saved from tiredness and an excess of demands.

Through our lives and by our prayers, your kingdom come

And let us remember those for whom we are responsible
and to whom we are accountable in what we do today.

Silence

May we show to them the thoughtfulness, tolerance and kindness of Jesus.

Through our lives and by our prayers, your kingdom come

Lord hear our prayers, and if today we might be the means
by which you answer the prayers of others
then may you find us neither deaf nor defiant,
but keen to fulfil your purpose, for Jesus' sake

Amen

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sending out

Closing responses

From where we are, to where you need us

Jesus, now lead on

From the security of what we know to the adventure of what you will reveal

Jesus, now lead on

To refashion the fabric of this world until it resembles the shape of your kingdom

Jesus, now lead on

Because good things have been prepared for those who love God

Jesus, now lead on

from A Wee Worship Book

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