**Sunday, October 18, 2026 - World Food Sunday – with Guest Speaker from Harvest Hands**

**Choir Intro** ***I Will Lift Up the Name of the Lord***

**Welcome** *Psalm 24:1* The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**
L: We light this candle as a symbolic action to recognize God's presence.
**P: In every moment, especially the moment of sharing food, Christ's light shines. Alleluia!**

**Acknowledgement** *-used with permission from Rev. Richard Golden*
Dunwich United Church acknowledges that the lands on which we gather are the ancestral lands of the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (an Anishinaabe community), Delaware Nation at Moraviantown, Munsee Delaware Nation (Lenape communities) and the Oneida Nation of the Thames (Haudenosaunee Confederacy), all covered by the McKee Treaty #2 of 1790. The Dish with One Spoon Wampum, created in 1142 is an agreement between First Nations on how to treat the land, the wildlife and each other. We will strive to live into the teachings of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum by:
Taking only what you need (from land and water)
Keeping the environment clean
Leaving some for the future
Let us continue to live into right relations with all God's creation.

**Call to Worship**
L: Come, let's praise God together!
**P: For God is great, and worthy of our praise!**
L: Let's tell stories of the things God has done - mighty acts of power and love throughout history:
**P: for God is great, and worthy of our praise!**
L: Let's remember how much he loves us, and celebrate the care he continues to show to all of creation:
**P: for God is great, and worthy of our praise!**
L: Let's worship God together!

**Ministry of Music** ***O God, You Call for Justice***

**Gathering Prayer** Good and gracious God, You are gathering this community from across the earth, asking us to pour out our lives on behalf of those who hunger. For hope, For justice, for daily bread. You are asking us to see the earth as you do, so very, very good. Trees with fruit, bursting with seed. Green plants for food, for humans and for every living creature. As a holy place for everything that breathes and to whom you have given life. Yet we see the realities before us, and it takes our breath away: Those whose bellies growl every day. Those who consume more than their fair share. Breathe new life into us; as a global community, as local congregations, gather us together so that we may remind each other of your intent for this earth. Gather us so that we may pour out our lives in Christ's name, as Christ does on behalf of those who hunger. Amen

**Gathering Hymn** ***I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me***, VU # 575

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I'm gonna live so (*live so*) | I'm gonna work so (*work so*) | I'm gonna pray so (*pray so*) | I'm gonna sing so (*sing so*) |
| God can use me | God can use me | God can use me | God can use me |
| Anywhere, Lord, | Anywhere, Lord, | Anywhere, Lord, | anywhere, Lord, |
| Anytime! (*anytime!)* | Anytime! (*anytime!)* | Anytime! (*anytime!)* | anytime! (*anytime!)* |
| I'm gonna live so (*live so*) | I'm gonna work so (work so) | I'm gonna pray so (*pray so*) | I'm gonna sing so (*sing so*) |
| God can use me | God can use me | God can use me | God can use me |
| Anywhere, Lord, | Anywhere, Lord, | Anywhere, Lord, | anywhere, Lord, |
| Anytime! (*anytime!)* | Anytime! (anytime!) | Anytime! (*anytime!)* | anytime! (*anytime!)* |

**Children's Ministry** The Tale of the Heartless King and the Barking Dog of Justice

There once was a heartless, selfish king who cared little for the struggles of his people. One day, a hunter arrived at the palace bringing an enormous dog. The dog was given a plate of meat, ate it instantly, and immediately started barking loudly and relentlessly. Over and over, plates of food were brought, the dog devoured them, and then it barked again and again without stopping. Infuriated by the deafening noise, the king ordered the hunter and the dog to leave. The hunter calmly refused, telling the king that they were sent by a higher authority to stay.

The dog's persistent barking would only stop when food and justice were delivered to the hungry and suffering people across the land. Realizing the dog's bark was a mirror for his own neglected duties, the king repented, opened his stores, and fed his kingdom. Once the realm was truly cared for, the dog finally lay down, grew quiet, and eventually walked away to a new land.

Power and authority must serve justice and kindness, not selfish indifference.

**Children's Hymn** ***Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands***, VU # 570

Jesus' hands were kind hands,
doing good to all,
healing pain and sickness,
blessing children small,
washing tired feet,
and saving those who fall;
Jesus' hands were kind hands,
doing good to all.

Take my hands, O Jesus,
let them work for you,
make them strong and gentle,
kind in all I do;
let me watch you, Jesus,
till I'm gentle too,
till my hands are kind hands,
quick to work for you.

**Children's Prayer** *by A. Morrisey*

**Dearest Loving God: Just as in our story, where some people didn't have enough food while the king had great amounts of wonderful tasting food, people around the real world have different amounts of food to eat. Some have plenty and even have too much sometimes. You know this already, but other people have just enough, some people have too little food, and some people are even starving. And just like in the story, there are people in the world who act like the barking dog and make a lot of fuss over the people who have too little food or are starving. Please help us be like one of those people. Please help us be a "watchdog for justice". We love you dear God and we trust in You that You will help us make things fairer in our world. Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer**

*Children Leave for Sunday School*

**Confession** -w*ritten by Joe Sereman, South Africa*

L: You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purposes.
**P: I gave them for a moment then withdrew them for the work was hard.**
L: You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice.
**P: I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.**
L: You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty.
**P: I closed them for I did not want to see.**
L: You asked for my life that you might work through me.
**P: I gave you a small part that I might not get "too involved."**
L: Lord, forgive me for calculated efforts to serve you only when it is convenient for me to do so, and only in those places where it is safe to do so, and only with those who make it easy to do so.
**P: Lord, forgive me, renew me, send me out as a usable instrument, that I may take seriously the meaning of your cross.**

**Words of Assurance** **O**ur God is close to all who call. God receives us as we are, lifts us up, and calls us again to be people of love and mercy - salt and light in a hungry, hurting world. Receive God's pardon and peace; your sins are forgiven.

**Hymn** ***I, the Lord of Sea and Sky***, VU # 509

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin
My hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Refrain
Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord,
If you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them;
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?
Refrain

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them,
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?
Refrain

**Prayer for the Offering** God of mercy, the gifts we bring are so small in comparison to the vast needs in our world - nowhere near enough to save the thousands who are dying of starvation or malnutrition, or even to meet the needs of the hungry and homeless in our cities, towns, and counties.
Yet we come with open hands, bringing what we can. As You once multiplied the five small loaves and two fish, multiply these gifts as well, so that, once again, the hungry may receive all they need, and more. Amen.

**Hymn** ***Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples***, VU # 507

Today we all are called to be
Disciples of the Lord
To help to set the captive free,
Make ploughshare out of sword
To feed the hungry, quench their thirst
Make love and peace our fast,
To serve the poor and homeless first,
Our ease and comfort last.

God made the world and at its birth
Ordained our human race
To live as stewards of the earth,
Responding to God's grace.
But we are vain and sadly proud,
We sow not peace but strife,
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud
That threatens all of life.

Pray justice may come rolling down
As in a mighty stream,
With righteousness in field and town
To cleanse us and redeem.
For God is longing to restore
An earth where conflicts cease,
A world that was created for
A harmony of peace.

May we in service to our God
Act out the living Word,
And walk the road the saints have trod
'Til all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we
Give thanks in one accord
To God who calls us all to be
Disciples of the Lord.

**Scripture Readings**

*Isaiah 55:1-13, – An Invitation to Abundant Life, Invitation to the Thirsty (NIV)*

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you; my faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples. Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour." Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the Sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.
Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the Lord's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."

*Exodus 16:13–18 (The Message)*

That evening quail flew in and covered the camp and in the morning there was a layer of dew all over the camp. When the layer of dew had lifted, there on the wilderness ground was a fine flaky something, fine as frost on the ground. The Israelites took one look and said to one another, man-hu (What is it?). They had no idea what it was. So Moses told them, "It's the bread God has given you to eat. And these are God's instructions: 'Gather enough for each person, about two quarts per person; gather enough for everyone in your tent.'" The People of Israel went to work and started gathering, some more, some less, but when they measured out what they had gathered, those who gathered more had no extra and those who gathered less weren't short—each person had gathered as much as was needed.

*Mark 6:37–44( NI)V*

But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"
"How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."
When they found out, they said, "Five - and two fish."
Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Hymn ***Jesus, Teacher, Brave and Bold***, VU # 605

Jesus, teacher, brave and bold,
Let us serve you, young and old.
Let us faith-filled workers be,
All around, your wisdom see.
Let us play and dance and sing,
Your goodness find in everything.

Jesus, friend, so strong and true,
Show us good, brave work to do.
Show us those who need a friend,
All things broken help us mend.
Free our minds and stretch our care,
Teach us to serve you everywhere.

**Introduction to Message**

*2 Corinthians 9:11 Giving as Abundant Witness,*

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

**Introduction of Jim Collins, of Harvest Hands** Jim Collins is the co-founder of Harvest Hands, a regional non-profit that rescues surplus food and directs it to agencies and households facing food insecurity across Southwestern Ontario. His background in agriculture, logistics, and food operations has helped shape the organization into a scalable community network.

Raised on a farm in Southwestern Ontario and trained at the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture, Jim built a career spanning horticulture, distribution, transportation, and food services. Along the way, he developed practical expertise in production systems and supply chains.

In March 2020, Jim launched Harvest Hands with his wife, Jacintha, and their daughter, Amy. What began in a church gymnasium has grown into a regional food rescue network sustained by strong community partnerships and disciplined operations. Today, more than 300 volunteers and food-sector donors help Harvest Hands serve over 450 agencies and community partners from Windsor to Oshawa. The organization has rescued and distributed more than $65 million worth of food and now provides the equivalent of over 225,000 meals each month.

**Message** *Harvest Hands*

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you this morning the work of Harvest Hands. Harvest Hands is a non-profit food rescue and distribution organization located in St. Thomas. Before I tell you about Harvest Hands, I'd like to share some astonishing statistics and information about food insecurity in our nation: almost 50% (46.5%) of all food in Canada ends up in landfills or compost piles or is plowed back into the ground. At the same time one in four Canadians (25%) experiences food insecurity daily. That is equivalent to the combined population of every province except Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec. Food insecurity is defined as "a condition of not having sufficient food to meet one's basic needs." It is a polite way of saying that Mom, Dad, and the kids go to bed hungry; parents skip their portion, so the children have enough to eat; or children go to school with no lunch. More than 10 million Canadians are affected by food insecurity!

More astonishing facts: Canada produces enough food for 52 million people – more than its population of 41 million. This surplus equates to 3.2 million metric tonnes annually – approximately 124,000 53-foot tractor-trailer loads of food. To put that in perspective, if the trailers were placed end-to-end on the 401 beginning at Currie Road they would stretch to downtown Halifax, Nova Scotia! The study also found that, of the nearly 50% of food wasted, 41% could be recovered, yet only 4% is currently rescued. This highlights the opportunity and potential to reduce food insecurity and feed people with food that otherwise would be lost. There are 127,000 food companies – and 45% of those companies have surplus! 23% of all food waste is caused by "best before" dates.

There is another untold aspect of food insecurity: In Canada, 61,000 nonprofit organizations provide food to their communities, including 4,000 food bank programs. The remaining 57,000 form what is called the "Invisible Food Network". They operate in full view, they include churches, community organizations, service clubs, individuals, NGOs. These numbers demonstrate that communities are taking care of their own. Community-led support is often more effective than relying solely on government legislation and subsidies, offering further evidence that "it takes a village" to get the job done!

Let's dispel the myth that there is a "food shortage": There is no food shortage – there are major deficiencies in the perishable food distribution network, which cannot respond promptly to large surpluses desperately needed by 25% of our population. Canada has robust agricultural production capacity, yet we cannot adequately meet th e needs of one in five Canadians.

We have 15 trucks on the road. If we had 30 trucks, we still could not pick up all the food available! Our goal is to provide good-quality food to those in need. We do not want to supply anything substandard. Often, when we pick up food, our truck receives the same products being shipped to Loblaws, Metro, Food Basics, FreshCo, and other retailers. The face of food insecurity has changed even since 2020. It was the poor, the homeless and hungry. Now it is school children, seniors, and even families who have full-time jobs.

The Mission of Harvest Hands: Our mission is to find solutions to systemic food insecurity in Canda, one of the richest countries in the world. Feeding the poor is very important to God! In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus said, "When I was hungry, you fed me; when I was homeless, you gave me shelter; when I was without clothing, you clothed me." "Master, when did we ever see you without these things?" Jesus replied, "If you have done it to the least of them, you have done it unto me."

For more than forty years our church and family have done our best to share the Good News of the Gospel: that Jesus died for our sins so that we might escape eternal death. Each time we give food, it is an opportunity to share "up close and personal: the love of God in a tangible way. Romans 2:4 says, "The goodness of God causes men to repent." St. Augustine wrote, preach the gospel always and, if necessary, use words"

Our actions always speak louder than our words. James 2:15-16 says it very clearly: "Suppose someone, whether a man or a woman, needs clothes or food, and one of you tells them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but fails to provide for that person's physical needs and basic necessities of life, what good does it do?" Harvest Hands is motivated to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way through acts of kindness. We are committed to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community. We have the opportunity to put Bibles, New Testaments, and tracts into the hands of thousands of people who we would never have reached through traditional methods.

How did it all start? Early in 2020, we asked, "there must be more we can do." We knocked on doors, made calls, sent texts, and emails to growers, farmers, food processors, canneries, and retailers. We asked a simple question: "Do you have

any surplus, seconds, or products approaching their best-before dates?" To our surprise they were willing to help but said "we have been trying!" We currently have more than 125 food suppliers that regularly provide fresh, frozen, and shelf-sable products at no charge! We started in our church gymnasium in March 2020. God has led us every step of the way.

There was no one, three, or five-year plan; we simply took the next step, originally seven organizations and is now more than 450! We have experienced supernational favour all along the way. We have experienced supernatural favour all along the way. I could tell you countless stories of God's provision, intervention, protection, mercy, and grace. All of this adds new meaning to Philippians 4:19, which says, "My God supplies all our needs according to His riches and glory by and through Christ Jesus." We have seen Ephesians 3:20 in real time, where scripture says, "God can do exceedingly above and beyond anything we could ask or imagine." We have received trucks, walk-in freezers and coolers, a forklift, kitchen equipment, and so much more!

What do we do? We are a distribution centre for rescued food from across the region; we are not a food bank. Our objective is to put food into the hands of people and organizations that know the needs of those who are suffering, where they are located, and how to reach them. In short, Harvest Hands focuses on rescuing and moving food while local organizations serve people. We rescue fresh and frozen produce, dairy products, baked goods, meat, eggs, and other essential food items, then deliver them throughout Southwestern Ontario.

How does it work? Seven days a week our volunteers pick up food from across the region and bring it to our distribution centre in St. Thomas. Upon receipt, we inspect, count, sort, divide, and pack the food into manageable quantities that can be easily distributed and consumed. Products are stored in climate-controlled coolers and freezers until they are shipped. We quickly redistribute products to our network of food providers throughout the region from Windsor to Oshawa. Usually, everything is shipped within one or two days of receipt.

What area do we serve? With 15 trucks, we pick up and deliver food from Windsor to Oshawa. We work with generous partners who frequently backhaul products for us and others who significantly reduce freight costs. Across Southwestern Ontario we partner with more than 450 food providers, including food banks, shelters, soup kitchens, seniors' programs, missions, children's lunch programs, churches, and other community initiatives. We are adding 3-4 new organizations each week! More than one-third of non-profit food providers across Canada are forced to turn people away.

Harvest Hands supplies all food at no charge! We provide the equivalent of 115,000 meals each month. Some of the organizations we ship to are: West Elgin Daffodil Auxiliary-Welfare, West Elgin Community, Good Things Outreach, Glad Tidings Church, Chatham Ken Encampment, Merline United Church FB, Bothwell Seniors, Delaware Nation, Oneida Store. We have 80 routs across Southwestern Ontario.

A few examples of major rescues, the magnitude is self-explanatory! 38,000 lbs. of cake mix; 135,000 lbs. of apples, $176,000 worth of Miracle Whip, 10,000 lbs of potatoes, 207,000 chocolates, 45 pallets of pepperoni, $195,000 worth of pasta, $80,000 worth of salads.

Where are we today? To date, we have rescued just over $70 million worth of food for tens of thousands of people in need. We average more than $515,000 weekly. Our best week was $1,025,000. All food is supplied at no charge. We have never purchased food for distribution, and we have never charged for any food provided. The availability of good-quality, nutritious food, in proportion to the ever-increasing demand among those in need, is nothing short of a miracle.

We never say "no". Sometimes, we receive more than we can handle! To accommodate this, we have expanded our operations to include: Commercial Production Kitchen where we make soups, stews, chili, muffins, cakes, and ready-to-go meals; a food dehydrator which transforms fruits and vegetables into nutritious soups and healthy dried fruit; For overseas shipments we have partnered with others and shipped surplus non-perishable food to Ukraine, Guyana, St. Vincent, and Liberia, recently filling a full shipping container for Liberia which ships October 23.

Very little goes to waste. Less than 5% of all rescued food cannot be used. Any product that does not meet our "good quality" standard is shipped to local farmers for animal feed or composting. We have a unique business model: No product or labour costs – all food is donated and the labour is provided by volunteers. As a result, every $1 donated provides three meals. This is based on a $9.00 meal. All gifts receive a charitable receipt.

Our Volunteer Community: Our greatest asset is our community of more than 275 regular volunteers who serve from 3-45 hours each week. They bring experience, knowledge, skills, and a passion to serve. Our volunteer family includes a wide range of people: retirees, students, members of service clubs and churches, school groups, seniors, business teams, and youth groups. Our youngest volunteer is 5 years old; our oldest is 91! Volunteers log 1500 hours weekly, which, at today's minimum wage, would cost $1.9 million annually. Every day we watch the community work together to create a better world for all. Many volunteers say they serve because they want to make a difference in the lives of those who are less fortunate.

We are funded by individuals, companies, churches, service clubs, foundations, estates, and other community organizations. Our general expenses are currently $95,000 per month. We have no idea how our expenses became so high or how we manage to pay our bills every month, but God provides. David Mainse, of 100 Huntley Street, said, "God is seldom early, but He is never late!"

Conclusion: We have received so many blessings and such great favour throughout the past six years. It is almost inexplicable! We are so grateful to God for all He has done to make Harvest Hands a vehicle through which He can work to see His will done on hearth as it is in Heaven and to meet the needs of His people throughout the region. In many ways, as we provide food for those in need, we are having Church "as we go"!

If you are in the St. Thomas area, drop in anytime for a tour of our facilities and to see the work firsthand. You are always welcome at 2 Currah Street, off Edward Street, in St. Thomas.

Finally, please keep Harvest Hands in your prayers, and consider joining us by volunteering. Thank you for your time.

**Affirmation after Reflection**

L: We dare to dream of a world
**P: in which hunger is unknown: where scarcity is an illusion, and everyone has a place at the table.**
L: We dare to dream of a world
**P: in which generosity is the norm: where greed finds no foothold, and there is more than enough for all.**
L: We dare to dream of a world in which
**P: love rules: where compassion is the first response, and there is no place for bigotry. We dare to dream. We dare to pray. We dare to believe.**

**Prayers Of and For the People**

L: For every child, man and woman who has gone without food today.
**P: For the farmers who are battling erratic weather such as prolonged droughts and/or flooding to grow food.**
L: For families and individuals who live with the fear of conflict and the fear of hunger.
**P: For the parents who go hungry and whose hearts are filled with worry for how they will feed their children.**
L: For children who are too weak to play because they do not have nutritious food.
**P: For the helpers who do their best to provide access to food for people who are hungry.**
L: For government leaders, that their hearts will be moved to act with compassion.
**P: For us, that we will be grateful for what we have and share when we can. Amen**

**Hymn *We Are Pilgrims (The Servant Song)***, VU # 595

We are pilgrims on a journey,
fellow travellers on the road,
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

Sister, let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you,
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you,
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

**Prayer**

L: God, you placed me in the world to be its light. I was afraid of the shadows, afraid of poverty. I did not want to know other people's struggles. And my light slowly faded away.
**P: Forgive me, Jesus.**
L: God, you placed me in the world to live in community. Thus you have taught me to love, to share in life, to struggle for bread and justice, your truth incarnate in my life.
**P: So be it, Jesus. We pray for all who work for justice, freedom, and abundant life.**

**Parting Hymn *Go Make a Diff'rence***, MVU # 209

Go, make a diff'rence
We can make a diff'rence
Go make a diff'rence in the world.
Go, make a diff'rence
We can make a diff'rence
Go make a diff'rence in the world.

**Benediction** May God continue to bless us as we respond to your call, share your abundance, and follow you. You called everyone who thirsts to come to the waters, multiplied loaves and fishes, and invited all of us to the banquet. We will go out in joy and be led back in peace. As we go out, help us remember that Christ has no body but ours.

**Choral Amen**

**Extinguish the Christ Candle**