

Glebe-St. James United Church

World Food Sunday

October 18, 2026

Please note: the livestream camera only captures the chairs at the front of the church. Sitting in the pews or at the back will keep you off camera. During the theme conversation, only the backs of children's heads are shown. – The Worship Team

Consider reflecting on the journey of the food you brought for the food drive—from the earth and those who grow it, to those who transport and prepare it, to the neighbour who receives it. In this way, our collection will become an act of gratitude and solidarity, rather than simply a charitable gesture.

Gathered by God

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

"Air"

Welcome

Susan Palmai

In the name of the Holy Mystery,
who is Wholly Love,
we welcome you to Creator's House.
Thanks be to God!

Good morning and welcome, everyone, to our worship service at Glebe-St. James United Church in downtown Ottawa on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 11.

My name is Susan Palmai and I am a Nattering Knitter.

We're so glad you're here today. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a longtime member, whether you are joining us in person or online, we hope you feel at home. Please remember to wear a name tag if you are here in person – it's so much easier to feel part of a community when we can greet each other by name. Name tags are available at the entrances to the sanctuary.

We are an Affirming Community of Faith in the United Church of Canada - a place of faith, love and community. You are welcome in our sanctuary. If you are looking for a place where your soul can breathe, sit back and listen to the inspirational music. If you are looking for community and connection, this is a place of acceptance, friendship and support. If you are looking for somewhere where you can make a difference in your community, this is a place where you can help to feed those struggling to make ends meet. We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities feel loved and supported. Thank you for being here.

Announcements

Following the service today the Women's Intergenerational Group will gather for a potluck and conversation with Paul Grose – GSJ Minister of Music. If you did not bring a lunch, don't worry there will be enough to go around.

Later on this afternoon the labyrinth will be open. Why not drop by and take a walk to your Quiet Centre?

Jeff Bird plays Hildegard von Bingen – Mark this concert in your calendar for October 24th. This ethereal performance is not to be missed.

Goes Out to Dinner returns in November 2026. More details on the program can be found in the e-update but a form for those interested in hosting or being a guest in our popular dinner program is attached. Please see David Brown or Margaret Ford for more information.

Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Teresa

Ottawa is built on un-ceded Anishinaabe Algonquin territory. The peoples of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation have lived on this territory for millennia. Their culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land. We honour the peoples and land of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation. We also honour all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples who have made Ottawa their home and we thank them for their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

**Our tears, falling down like rain to the ground
will water seeds of change.**

Kyrie, kyrie, kyrie, kyrie, kyrie eleison.

Call to Worship

We gather as people who hunger for food, for hope, and for a world made whole.

We gather to share God's gifts and seek God's justice.

God has filled the earth with abundance, yet many of our neighbours go without.

Open our hearts to compassion and our eyes to the causes of hunger.

Jesus calls us to give to God what belongs to God.

May our worship become love in action, until all have enough. Amen.

Hymn For the Beauty of the Earth

For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,

God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon, and stars of light, R

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild, R

For each perfect gift sublime
to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven,

Opening Prayer

Generous and loving God,
You have given us a world rich in beauty and abundance,
a world capable of nourishing every living thing.
Yet hunger persists, and too many people struggle to put food on their tables.
As we gather in worship on this World Food Sunday,
awaken us to the needs of our neighbours.
Help us recognize the dignity of every person
and the sacred worth of every life.
Give us grateful hearts for the food we enjoy,
compassionate hearts for those who hunger,
and courageous hearts to challenge the injustices
that leave people without enough.
May our worship inspire more than good intentions.
May it lead us into acts of sharing, justice, and love.
In the spirit of Jesus, who welcomed the hungry
and made room for all at the table, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Healing

Would you pray with me:

God of abundance and compassion,
we confess that we sometimes take our own security for granted.
We may see hunger as someone else's problem, or believe
that the suffering of others is too complicated for us to address.
We confess that we sometimes give from what we have left over
without asking why some have so much while others have so little.
Forgive us when we judge those who need help,
when we overlook the struggles of our neighbours,
or when we accept injustice as simply the way the world works.
Open our eyes to the systems that perpetuate poverty and hunger.
Free us from indifference and despair.
Teach us to share generously, to listen without judgment,
and to work faithfully for a world where everyone has enough.
May your love transform our hearts and guide our actions. Amen.

Assurance of God's Love

Hear the good news:

God's love is not limited by our failures,

and God's grace is not withheld until we get everything right.

We are forgiven, renewed, and invited to begin again.

God calls us not into guilt, but into the hope of a transformed life—
a life of compassion, generosity, and justice.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Hymn May the Peace of God Be Your Peace MV 222

May the peace of God be your peace.

May the love of God be the love you show.

May the joy of God be the joy you know,

and may the world that God would see be found in you.

Listening for Wisdom

Prayer for Wisdom

God of wisdom, as we listen to the words of Scripture,

open our minds to new understanding and our hearts to your truth.

Help us hear Jesus' challenge to the powers of his day

and recognize the questions our own world must face.

May your Spirit guide us beyond easy answers toward faithful action,

that we may become people who share your abundance

and work for the well-being of all. Amen.

Scripture Matthew 22:15-22

April Yorke

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then,

what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

This is wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

Gift of Music "You Reap What You Sow"

Pepper Choplin

*What you sow you will reap, reap what you sow,
What you plant in your life will surely grow,
And what you grow with love will surely bloom
and the fruit of your labor will come back to you.*

*Do not tire from doing good,
And never give up when the road gets rough,
For one day soon a great reward you'll see,
From the good you've done
When the harvest comes.*

*What you sow you will reap, reap what you sow,
What you plant in your life will surely keep,
Until you achieve the things you're striving for
And taste the joy,
And taste the joy,
And then you'll taste the joy of your reward,
Come taste the joy of your reward.*

*What you sow you will reap, reap what you sow,
What you plant in your life will surely grow,
And what you grow with love will surely bloom,
And the fruit of your labor will come back to you.*

Theme Conversation Sharing What We Have

Good morning, everyone!

Look what I brought with me today! What is it?

(Let the children answer.)

An apple! Yum! Apples are good to eat. They help our bodies grow strong.

Now, I have a question for you. Do you think everyone should have enough food to eat?

(Encourage the children to answer.)

Yes! Everyone needs food. Grown-ups need food, children need food, and even our pets need food!

But sometimes, some people don't have enough food. That can make them hungry and sad.

What can we share?

(Place the apple in the basket.)

Let's pretend we have a basket full of food. We have apples, bread, carrots, and bananas!

If I have lots of food and my friend has none, what could I do?

(Invite answers. You might hear "share!")

Yes! I could share.

Let's practice together. Hold out your hands as if you are giving something to a friend.

Leader: What can we do when someone needs food?

Children: We can share!

Leader: What can we do when someone feels lonely?

Children: We can be kind!

Leader: What can we do when someone needs help?

Children: We can help!

(Repeat the actions together.)

What did Jesus teach us?

In our Bible story today, some people asked Jesus a tricky question about money. Jesus reminded them that there are important things in life beyond money. Jesus wanted people to think about God and how they live together.

And we know something wonderful about God: God wants us to care for one another. We can show God's love when we share, when we help, and when we make sure that other people are cared for.

Today is World Food Sunday. Our church remembers people who don't always have enough food. We can bring food to the food bank, help our neighbours, and ask grown-ups to help make sure everyone has enough to eat.

Even though you are little, you can show God's love in big ways!

You can help share a snack. You can help someone who is sad. You can remember that everyone matters.

And remember, we don't share because someone is more important than us or less important than us. We share because every person is important and deserves care.

(Invite the children to hold their hands open like a bowl.)

Dear God, Thank you for our food.

Thank you for loving us

Help us share what we have.

Help us care for one another.

And help everyone have enough to eat.

Amen.

Hymn Little by Little *(Verses 1 and 2)* TLUS 134

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little I know,

The tiniest seed will grow.

Watered by peace and justice,

watered by peace and justice,

watered by peace and justice:

tools to change our world.

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little I know,

The tiniest seed will grow.

There are some questions that are asked because someone genuinely wants to know the answer. And there are other questions that are asked because the person asking hopes to catch us out.

The question put to Jesus in today's Gospel belongs firmly in the second category.

The religious leaders send people to Jesus with a question about taxes: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?"

It sounds straightforward enough. Should faithful Jewish people pay taxes to the Roman emperor? But it is a trap. If Jesus says yes, he risks alienating people who resent the Roman occupation and the heavy taxes imposed upon them. If he says no, he risks being accused of rebellion against Rome.

Either answer could get him into trouble.

Jesus asks to see the coin used to pay the tax. They bring him a denarius, and he asks, "Whose head is this, and whose title?"

"Caesar's," they reply.

Then Jesus says those familiar words: "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's."

The questioners are amazed, and they leave him alone.

It is a clever answer. Jesus refuses to be trapped in their narrow choice. He does not simply take one side or the other. Instead, he invites them to think more deeply about the relationship between political power, money, and faithfulness to God.

And that is where this Gospel reading speaks to us on World Food Sunday. Because today, we are invited to ask some questions of our own.

What do we owe one another? What does our faith ask of us when our neighbours do not have enough to eat? And what kind of society are we helping to create?

Whose image do we bear?

Jesus points to the image stamped on the coin. The emperor's image identifies the coin as belonging to the emperor's economic system.

But there is another image that matters.

In the creation story in Genesis, human beings are created in the image of God. Not just the wealthy. Not just the powerful. Not just those who have enough to eat, or those who can contribute to society in ways that others recognize.

Every person bears the image of God.

The person who is working two jobs and still cannot afford groceries bears that image. The parent who quietly skips a meal so a child can eat bears that image. The senior who must choose between heating their home and buying fresh food bears that image. The person who visits a food bank, perhaps feeling embarrassed or defeated, bears that image.

And so does the volunteer who stocks the shelves, the farmer who grows the food, the worker who harvests and transports it, and the neighbour who places a donation in the collection basket.

Every one of us carries a dignity that cannot be measured by income, productivity, possessions, or social standing.

If we take seriously the belief that all people bear God's image, then the question of hunger becomes much more than a question of charity. It becomes a question of justice.

Food is more than a commodity

We live in a society where food is bought and sold, priced and packaged, advertised and transported. Much of our economic life depends upon this

system, and farmers, food producers, grocery workers, truck drivers, and countless others work hard to bring food to our tables.

Yet something is deeply troubling when good food is available in our communities while people go hungry because they cannot afford it. We know that food insecurity is not simply a matter of poor planning or individual choices. People may lose their jobs. Rents and other costs may rise faster than their incomes. Disability, illness, family circumstances, and unexpected emergencies can make an already difficult situation worse. Some people work full-time and still struggle to make ends meet.

And there are broader questions about wages, housing, the cost of living, the treatment of migrant and agricultural workers, and the systems that determine who has access to nutritious food.

We cannot solve all these problems by ourselves. But neither can we pretend that they have nothing to do with us.

When Jesus speaks about what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God, he reminds us that the claims of the economic and political systems around us are not the only claims upon our lives.

Our faith asks us to look beyond the price of something to its human value. Beyond what the market rewards to what our neighbours need. Beyond the question of what is legally required to the question of what is morally right. Food may have a price, but human dignity does not.

And a society that allows people to go hungry while others have more than enough must be willing to ask whether its priorities are serving the common good.

Charity and justice belong together

On World Food Sunday, many congregations bring food for their local food banks. We make financial donations. We volunteer our time. We collect cans, boxes, and bags of groceries.

These are important acts of care.

A food bank can provide relief when a family has run out of options. A bag of groceries can make a difficult week more manageable. A meal offered without judgment can remind someone that they are not alone.

We should never underestimate the power of these acts of kindness.

But we should also be honest about their limits.

Food banks were created to respond to hunger, not to replace the responsibility of governments, employers, and society to ensure that people can meet their basic needs. The generosity of volunteers cannot, on its own, correct inadequate incomes, unaffordable housing, or the many barriers that leave people food insecure.

We need both compassion and justice.

Compassion responds to the person who is hungry today. Justice asks why that person is hungry and what must change so that they will not have to depend on emergency assistance tomorrow.

Compassion fills a grocery bag. Justice works toward a world in which everyone has enough money to fill their own grocery cart with dignity.

Compassion welcomes people to the food bank. Justice challenges the conditions that make food banks necessary.

As a church, we are called to both.

Our food bank collections matter. So do our voices when we speak about poverty, affordable housing, adequate incomes, accessible community services, and policies that allow everyone to live with dignity.

We can give generously and ask difficult questions. We can offer immediate help and work for lasting change. These are not competing expressions of our faith. They belong together.

What belongs to God?

Jesus does not give his questioners a detailed political programme. Instead, he leaves them with a question that reaches beyond the coin in their hands.

What belongs to God?

If the coin bears Caesar's image, and human beings bear God's image, then perhaps Jesus is inviting us to consider how we live in relationship with the world God loves.

Our money, our time, our skills, our influence, and our choices can all become ways of expressing our deepest commitments.

We can use what we have to protect our own comfort at the expense of others. Or we can use what we have to build communities in which people are cared for.

We can regard hunger as someone else's problem. Or we can recognize that the well-being of our neighbours is connected to our own.

We can assume that the economic system is beyond question. Or we can ask whether our shared life reflects the values of compassion, fairness, and justice that Jesus teaches.

Giving to God what belongs to God is not simply about putting money in an offering plate. It is about offering our lives to the work of love.

It is about recognizing God's image in the people around us and allowing that recognition to shape our decisions.

A table with room for everyone

At the heart of Christian faith is a vision of a table where there is room for everyone.

At Jesus' table, people who were respected and people who were rejected sat together. People with resources and people with very little found themselves welcomed. Again and again, Jesus challenged the boundaries that separated those considered worthy from those treated as outsiders.

And again and again, food became part of the story.

Bread was shared. Fish were distributed. Hungry people were fed. A small offering became enough for a crowd when people were invited into a different understanding of abundance.

That vision continues to inspire us.

Imagine a community in which no one has to hide their hunger. A community in which asking for help is not a source of shame. A community in which children have enough to eat, seniors do not have to choose between food and medication, and workers earn enough to support themselves and their families. Imagine a society in which food is understood not only as a commodity to be purchased but also as essential to human flourishing.

That vision may seem distant, but it begins with the choices we make today. It begins when we share what we have. When we listen without judgment. When we support our local food bank. When we challenge the stigma attached to poverty. When we advocate for fairer systems. When we refuse to accept hunger as inevitable.

And it begins when we recognize that the person receiving help is not less worthy than the person offering it. We are all human beings, bearing the image of God, dependent upon one another and upon the gifts of the earth.

On this World Food Sunday, we bring our donations with gratitude. We give thanks for those who grow food, prepare meals, stock shelves, deliver groceries, and care for their neighbours.

But we bring something more as well: our willingness to imagine a world transformed by God's justice.

The question is not simply whether we will give something away today.

The question is what kind of people we will become, and what kind of community we will build together.

Whose image do we bear?

And what would it mean to live as though every person we meet bears that same sacred image?

May our answer be found not only in our words, but in the food we share, the justice we pursue, and the love we practice.

May there be enough for everyone.

And may we help make it so.

Amen.

Responding in Thanksgiving

Hymn When A Poor One

VU 702

- 1 When a poor one who has nothing shares with strangers,
when the thirsty water give unto us all,
when the wounded in their weakness
 strengthen others,
then we know that God still goes that road with us,
then we know that God still goes that road with us.
- 2 When at last all those who suffer find their comfort,
when they hope though even hope seems hopelessness,
when we love though hate at times seems
 all around us, R
- 3 When our joy fills up our cup to overflowing,
when our lips can speak no words other than true,
when we know that love for simple
 things is better, R
- 4 When our homes are filled with goodness in abundance,
when we learn how to make peace instead of war,
when each stranger that we meet is
 called a neighbour, R

Invitation to Give

On this World Food Sunday, we are reminded that our gifts can nourish both people and hope. Our offerings support the ministry of this congregation and the care we extend to our neighbours. Our gifts of food and financial support can also help people facing food insecurity today. As we give, let us remember that generosity is not simply about what we place in a basket or a food bank collection. It is about the kind of community we are creating together. Let us give with gratitude, compassion, and a commitment to a world where everyone has enough.

Offering Hymn Who Will Speak A Word of Warning (*Verse 1*)

TLUS 130

**Who will speak a word of warning to a world whose wealth expands,
as the growing wealth is gathered into ever fewer hands?
Christ, you speak a word of warning for the church to know and tell:
greed is death and life is giving; hands that give receive as well.**

Offering Prayer

God of all good gifts,
We offer these gifts in gratitude for the food that sustains us, the earth that nourishes us, and the people whose labour brings food to our tables.
Bless these offerings and all they make possible. May they provide practical help to those who are hungry, sustain the ministries of this congregation, and support the work of building a more just and caring community.
Help us offer not only our money and our resources, but also our time, our voices, and our willingness to work for change.
May all that we give become an expression of your generous love.
Amen.

Prayers of the People Give Peace to Ev'ry Heart

MV 86

**Give peace to ev'ry heart.
Give peace to ev'ry heart.
Give peace, God. Give peace, God.**

Prayer of Jesus

**Our Mother and Father
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Sent by the Spirit

Hymn We Are Pilgrims

VU 595

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you
 in the night-time of your fear;
 I will hold my hand out to you,
 speak the peace you long to hear.

- 4 I will weep when you are weeping,
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.

Sending Forth

Go into the world remembering that God's abundance is meant to be shared.
See the dignity of God in every person you meet.
Share what you can. Listen with compassion.
Challenge the systems that leave people hungry.
Work for a world where everyone has access to the food they need.
Our worship continues wherever love becomes action and justice becomes hope. Go in peace, ready to serve.

May God's love surround you,
Christ's example guide you,
and the Spirit move through you.
We pray as we sing...

Sung Amen

VU 968

Music for the Journey

"March"

End of Worship | Beginning of Service

Thank you to those who have joined us this morning for worship.

We invite those here to join us in Fraser Hall, follow the service, for a time of fellowship & refreshments.

Musical Acknowledgements

This morning's organ prelude, "Air," is by Alan Ridout (1934-1996), a British composer and teacher.

The postlude, "March," is by Andrew Gant (b. 1963), a British composer, singer, author, teacher and politician. The melody features the festival trumpet stop, a chamade stop that on a traditional organ projects horizontally into the room for dramatic effect.

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SAVE THE DATE – Tuesday, November 3rd
Our next Congregational Conversation –
Tuesday, November 3rd, 7pm to 9pm at the church.
More details to follow.

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