

Pentecost #23

World Hunger Sunday

11-8-2020

Rev. John V. Trautwein

Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ’s coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory –the marriage feast of the lamb.”

We are together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Hymn: [“Jesus Calls Us”](#)

Psalm 70

¹ Be pleased, O God, to deliver me!

O Lord, make haste to help me!

² Let them be put to shame and confusion

who seek my life!

Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor

who desire my hurt!

³ Let them be appalled because of their shame

who say, “Aha, Aha!”

⁴ May all who seek thee

rejoice and be glad in thee!

May those who love thy salvation

say evermore, “God is great!”

⁵ But I am poor and needy;

hasten to me, O God!

Thou art my help and my deliverer;

O Lord, do not tarry!

Hymn of Praise: [“Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son,.Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord Amen.”

1st Reading: [Amos 5:18-24](#)

2nd Reading: [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)

The Gospel: [Matthew 25:1-13](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Let Justice Floe Like Streams”](#)

The Message: ([Video Link to the sermon and Hunger presentation](#))

Today we begin observing what has become World Hunger season at Epiphany .This time each year has become so important that it can be said to be a defining time for who we are as a congregation. There is little doubt that this year’s experience of our world hunger appeal may be both negatively and positively affected by these troubling times. Negatively, in that we will be limited as to our personal witnessing of the angels being placed on our Angel Tree and our decreased weekly physical attendance. On the other hand, with the internet service and the potential through online giving, perhaps more people will participate.

One thing is for certain the need is overwhelmingly present. 2020 has been a challenging time around the world and within our nation. It seems like we are experiencing relentless attacks both of man’s making and the natural order causing pain and suffering to almost everybody throughout every nation. This year more than ever we are experiencing even greater hardships within our own nation. A spreading pandemic has not only caused sickness, some with lingering effects, and nearly a quarter of million deaths in our country alone, but also economic hardships. Unprecedented amount of natural disasters, wildfires, tornados, and hurricanes, have left a path of unimaginable devastation. Complete towns have been leveled and tens of thousands have been left homeless.

During 2019 in the United States there were 34 million people including 10 million children living in poverty. That means families of four lived off of \$25,000 or less per year. This left many not knowing if there would be a next meal no less money for the other basic necessities to live. Many have relied on the availability of food pantries and soup kitchens. With the onslaught of covid 19 during this year, 23 million people are unemployed and thousands of small businesses permanently closed or struggling to stay alive. Poverty and hunger are certainly increasing. With safety net programs expiring, the need for food pantries and soup kitchens will be stretched beyond their capacity to meet the need. Increasingly many of our brothers and sister in our own nation are or may soon be facing the need for the basics in living – food, clothing, and shelter.

Worldwide, political turmoil, refugees, on-going drought, extreme poverty, and hunger continue to bring suffering, and untimely death to millions each year. Add to this the deadly

spread of the pandemic this year the problem of human suffering becomes even greater. Last year over 800 million people worldwide experienced extreme poverty. This means that they earned less than \$1.90 per day. Hunger and poverty related causes led to the death of a child five years or younger nearly every ten seconds. These tragic statistics will only grow with the pandemic since those living in undeveloped countries will not have access to adequate healthcare. The areas of the world experiencing the extremes of poverty and hunger are first in Asian and Pacific nations with 520 million in poverty. Next is Sub-Saharan Africa with over 240 million in poverty. Finally, there are millions in Latin America and the Caribbean nations.

All too many have said that little can be done to meet the needs of those suffering and dying from hunger. That is not true. First, the world produces more than enough food to feed the entire world erasing suffering from hunger. Consider this, 1.3 trillion tons of food, is wasted every year. There is enough food but the lack of will, greed, needless waste, or political reasons, food has been kept from millions who are in need. If eradicating hunger becomes a priority in the world community then hunger could be eradicated. Second, even with that in mind, since 1979 until 2015, hunger and the undernourished have decreased by 50 percent. Tragically though, since then hunger and undernourishment have been on the gradual increase. One of the reasons is that economically the disparity between the haves and have-nots has been increasing. The challenge has become greater since the pandemic presents new obstacles to overcome. The resulting issue of poverty and hunger will definitely be an even greater problem in the coming year but if the will is there, inroads can be made into decreasing those who suffer and die from hunger. It has been proven in the past that this can happen even during difficult economic times.

With more experience over the past years, world hunger programs have become increasingly effective. Much of this is due to working partnerships among like motivated organizations. This is most certainly true with the ELCA's World Hunger program which has partnered with other world-wide organizations in order to support their areas of expertise to be more effective in meeting the problems of poverty and hunger. By doing this it alleviates duplicity of services which leads to more effective utilization of funds and skills. Therefore, The World Hunger Appeal has partnerships with The Lutheran World Relief, The Lutheran World Federation, domestic Lutheran organizations and churches, Bread for the World, Church World Services, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and the Good Gifts program. With this approach it allows 93% of all moneys received to go toward programs directly effecting hunger and poverty issues. This means our contributions are able to reach hunger and poverty problems in 62 nations including the United States.

The goal of the hunger program is to not only meet the emergency needs of people but to work towards alleviating the causes for future need. This is accomplished through programs focused on self-sustaining solutions. The problems may at first seem impossible but they are very basic to the health and welfare of all human beings. The challenge is one of commitment to solve the need even though the circumstances may vary as to the particular cause in each situation.

For many of the undeveloped countries the challenges are so overwhelming that they have left people devastated with little internal assistance to answer their need. This is especially true with countries like Haiti and Sub-Saharan Africa. The basic needs among many of those in poverty and hunger go beyond emergency food assistance and call for education programs, research capabilities, occupational, farming, and business development, sanitation infrastructures and programs, clean water, and health care. When entering a community with a hunger problem with emergency action there is a commitment to remain there until these basic needs are fulfilled and there is the foundation for a self-sustaining life. Village by village and community by community then has hope for the future. This is where the partnerships make this effort possible'

In the United States, the ELCA's World Hunger program gives guidance as well as financial assistance to Lutheran churches and organization for programs to help those in need of food, shelter, and medical assistance. This has allowed the church to become active with food pantries, soup kitchens, health clinics, and educational programs within areas devastated from on-going hunger and poverty, as well as to help during natural disasters.

Today all around us seems to be summed up in the prophet Amos's words, "Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it." We may take this attitude of doom and gloom and let it determine who we are and die to a life of hope. We even may participate in worshipping every week but unless we take heed of Amos's words, "I hate your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.... But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

This means that when we pursue justice for all of God's children then our lives will be open and motivated to do all that we can to alleviate their pain and suffering. This is when we begin to understand righteousness.

We may be living through tough and uncertain times but we must never overlook those whose burden is even greater than ours. They need us to help them to live another day. They need not suffer and die from the lack of life sustaining gifts which alleviate their hunger and suffering. Again this year we will celebrate God's love with the angel tree. Each Sunday until the end of the year, for each donation, both in person and online an angel, will be placed on the tree and we will celebrate these gifts of love. We can help those who are hungry and are suffering with each angel place on the angel tree of God's love. Now let us begin with Jesus' words echoing throughout our very being, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."

Anthem: ["To Believe"](#) Jackie Evancho

Offering*: ([Link to online giving](#))

We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Most compassionate and loving God, we live in troubling and uncertain times which has caused much pain and suffering throughout the world. Instill in us the compassion and will to open our lives in order to see the desperate need of our brothers and sisters. May our compassion and love overcome the sacrifices which we may have to make so as to bring relief to those facing the basic life necessities in life in order to live another day. We also pray for our nation that calm and peace may be lived so that we begin to find unity and understanding no matter the issues which are divisive and harmful.

Continue to be with all those on the front lines of helping those who have been stricken by the pandemic and the natural disasters. They are giving so much of their lives while placing themselves in danger. We continue to pray for their safety and well-being.

We pray for all whole need your comforting and healing presence especially Chad Bittinger, Heidi Brackbill, Danny Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you;

The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters

Live on knowing God's love,

The joy of living this life of love,

And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.

So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Take My Life, an Let It Be"](#)

[Bible Study](#) with Vicar Karen Pugatch, Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30PM

***Offering to be sent to:**

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Online Giving: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org/>