

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Planning a Worship Service	4
Opening Greeting	5
Opening Prayer	5
Prayer of the Day	6
Prayer of Confession	7
Prayer of Intercession	9
Scripture	10
Reflections	11
Table Blessing	12
Three Trees and Their Fruit	14
True Fasting as Action Towards Justice	15
Enough to Share	16
Part of the Whole	17
United Methodist Church's Fight Against Malnutrition in Eastern Congo	19
Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration – Restoring crop yields, livelihoods and God-given Hope	19
Hunger Among the Wheat Fields: Patricia's Story	20
The Ten Commandments of Food and the Ten Commandments of Food for Kids	21
Offering Prayer	22
Prayer of Commitment	24
Benediction	25

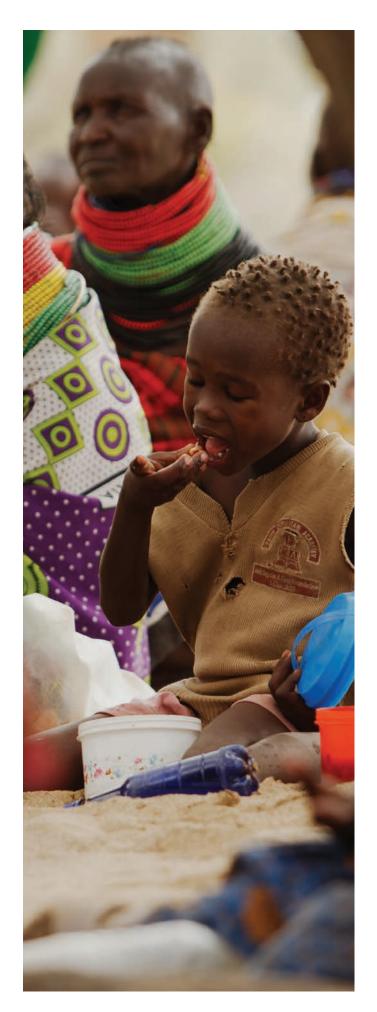




Liturgy Guide and Resources

We invite Christians from all around the world to gather for prayer and worship around the theme of global hunger and food justice.

We offer this guide to support worship planners to develop a service of prayer or worship that fits your local context. You will find selections of prayers to choose from, which are offered to be used or adapted for our own context.



Planning a Worship Service

The term "liturgy" refers to the structure of a worship service. Simply put, it is the way in which we, God's people, offer our prayer and praise to God in community. Depending on one's denomination or context, the liturgy may take on many forms. In some Christian traditions the liturgy is more formal and structured, while in others it may be more casual or spontaneous. As you plan your own service of prayer or worship, consider these common elements of a liturgy:

- **1. Greeting / Opening Prayer / Prayer of the Day:** Gathering the people together for worship with words of welcome, a blessing, and/ or a prayer that sets the tone for the service
- **2. Music:** Hymns, songs, or psalms are used throughout the service to reflect the theme or scriptures of the day
- **3. Prayer of Confession:** We acknowledge our sinfulness and shortcomings, asking for forgiveness, and returning our hearts back towards God's love
- **4. Scripture Reading/s:** One or more scripture texts are selected that focus our hearts and minds on God's Word
- 5. Sermon / Homily / Reflection: A worship leader (clergy or laity) offers a message that further explains and applies God's Word to the life of the congregation, with an invitation or challenge to respond
- **6. Prayers of Intercession:** Prayers are offered for the needs of others and for our world
- **7.** Offering / Offering Prayer: We prayerfully offer ourselves and our resources to share God's love with others and for the support of God's church
- 8. Communion / Eucharist (optional):
 The congregation may share the bread and cup of communion around the Lord's Table (depending on denomination and context)
- **9. Prayer of Commitment:** We recommit ourselves to being faithful followers of Jesus Christ, through prayer and action
- **10. Benediction / Sending Forth:** The gathered community is sent out with a blessing

Opening Greeting

(based on Isaiah 58:6-8, 10-11)

Leader: Isn't this the fast I choose, says the Lord: releasing wicked restraints, setting free the mistreated, and breaking every yoke of injustice?

All: It is sharing our bread with the hungry, and bringing the homeless poor into our house, covering the naked when we see them, and not hiding from our own family

Leader: Then your light will break out like the dawn, and you will be healed quickly!

All: Our righteousness will walk before us, and the Lord's glory will be our rear guard!

Leader: Open your heart to the hungry and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted,

All: Then our light will shine in the darkness and our gloom will be like the noon

Leader: The Lord will guide you continually and provide for you, even in parched places

All: We will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water that won't run dry



Opening Prayer

(based on Isaiah 58:6-8, 10-11)

Leader: Let us pray,

God of Compassion and Justice,

Through the words of the prophet Isaiah, we hear your promises of justice for those who are oppressed, abundance for those who hunger for food or righteousness, and healing for your world. As we now gather together (from places all around the globe), may our worship be reflected - not only in our words - but with our hearts and our lives, as well. Inspire us and use us as bearers of your promises of justice, healing, and abundance for others and this world.

Glory and honor be to you, O God, now and forever,

All: Amen.

Prayer of the Day / Opening Prayer

(Option 1)

A Prayer for Children and Families

Loving God,

As we gather, we come with hearts open and eager to connect with you and with one another. We bring our prayers and reflections, knowing that you hear us and are present with us wherever we are.

We join in solidarity with others around the world, praying and acting against hunger. We recognize that there are many who do not have enough to eat, and we hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

We pray for all the children and families who go to bed hungry each night, for those who struggle to find nourishment and sustenance. May they experience your love and provision, and may their needs be met.

We also pray for the organizations and individuals working tirelessly to alleviate hunger and poverty. Grant them wisdom, resources, and strength as they seek to make a difference in the lives of those who are suffering.

Help us, dear God, to be compassionate and responsive to the needs of others. Inspire us to take action, both big and small, to combat hunger and injustice in our communities and in the world.

As we worship and reflect together today, may our hearts be filled with gratitude for the abundance we have been blessed with. May we never take for granted the food on our table and the provision in our lives.

Guide us, O Lord, in our actions and choices, that we may be instruments of your love and justice. Teach us to share generously, to be mindful of our neighbours, and to work towards a world where all are fed and cared for.

We offer this prayer in faith and hope, trusting in your goodness and mercy.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

(Option 1)

It is suggested that various voices from the gathered community offer up the following petitions. The scripture references need not be spoken out loud.

Voice 1: Let us pray, Creator God, we come before you, acknowledging that we have sinned in the ways we have misused and abused the life-giving resources you have placed on the earth. We confess our failure to recognize the ongoing hunger crisis that exists in our World and our unwillingness to respond to ensure that the hungry are fed and the sick are healed (Isaiah 58:10).

Voice 2: We confess that we have missed the mark in dismantling systems that promote inequity and injustice that have resulted in widespread hunger and starvation. (Matthew 25:35)

Voice 3: We confess our ingratitude and selfish pride in failing to appreciate that all creation belongs to you, our Lord, and that the very life we have, the surroundings we live in and the food that we receive and have access to is a divine gift from you. (Psalm 24:1)

Voice 4: We confess that we have failed to answer your call to share this gift unconditionally, in order that we may make a difference in the lives of people in need. (James 2:15-19)

Voice 5: Forgive us, Lord, as we confess our sins to you, and may your pardoning grace lead us to repentance.

All: God. in your mercy, hear our prayer of confession. Forgive us and lead us forward by your grace to be hope and light in the world.

Voice 6: As a forgiven and repentant people, may we continually be transformed in the way we be have, the way we consume, the way we treat nature, and the way we treat each other. Empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit, may we be faithful stewards of your world, as we strive to provide food and sustenance for all.

Voice 7:

By doing this, O God, may our lives reflect the faith we profess, so that all peo-ple and all your creation may flourish. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

All: Amen.

Prayer of Confession

(Option 2)

Leader: When we ignore the beauty of creation,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When trees are torn down and forests become deserts.

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When bees die and mango trees no longer have fruit,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When we mine the land for its gold and oil, yet millions have no food,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: When we know what we should do, yet we walk the other way,

All: how terrible for us.

Leader: For we bring God's anger upon ourselves, and we walk into outer darkness.

Silence

God of all creation, hear the confession of our hearts. Send your spirit to renew the whole creation As we proclaim the everlasting love of your Son.

All: Amen

Spiritual Life Resources of the 10th WCC Assembly in Busan, South Korea

Prayer of Confession

(Option 3)

Lord God,

We come together today and acknowledge that you are our Creator, Sustainer and Judge. Help us to live in your world, your way and please forgive us when we fall short of your best.

Forgive us when we have not shared what we have for fear of not having enough.

Forgive us for not relying on you for our daily bread.

Forgive us when we have not loved our neighbour.

Help us, Lord God, to commit to a right and better relationship with food.

In the bounty of your good creation, we know that there is enough for all.

Help us to live into your promises of abundance for all.

It is in the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

God, at whose bidding the earth came into being Who promised and provides seedtime and harvest Who is faithful and loving to all he has made Give us this day our daily bread

Christ, whose food was to do the will of the one who sent you Inspire our hearts with desire to serve your purposes
That through us the poor and oppressed may be released
Give us this day our daily bread

Bread of life, Word made flesh Make your truth known in places where injustice prevails Speak through us to challenge greed and inequality Give us this day our daily bread

God and Father of all humanity
May we welcome those whom others might call stranger
So that in plenty or need, no-one need be excluded
Give us this day our daily bread

Faith in Foodbanks: Resources for Churches, Joint Public Issues Team: on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and Church Action on Poverty.

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk



Prayer of Jubilee

The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us

into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.

May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos

in the sure expectation

of a new heaven and a new earth,

when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,

your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen



The following scripture selections relate to the theme of hunger and food justice. It may be helpful to consider various translations as you select scripture/s for your setting.

	T
Isaiah 58:6-12	"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice Is it not to share your bread with the hungry"
Psalm 34:1-8	"O taste and see that the Lord is good "
Psalm 146:5-7	"Happy are those whose hope is in the Lord their God who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry"
Matthew 5:1-12/	(The Beatitudes) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled"
Luke 6: 20-26	(The Beatitudes) "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled"
Matthew 14:13-21 / Mark 6: 30-44 / John 6: 1-13	Feeding the Five Thousand (The miracle of the loaves and fishes)
Matthew 22: 34-40 / Mark 12: 28-34 Luke 10: 25-28	(The Greatest Commandment) "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" and "you shall love your neighbor as yourself"
Matthew 25:31-45	(The Sheep and the Goats) "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me."
	•

Luke 10: 25-37	The Parable of the Good Samaritan
Luke 11:1-13	(The Lord's Prayer) "Give us this day our daily bread" (Perseverance in Prayer) "For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."
Luke 14:15-24	The Parable of the Great Banquet
John 6:24-35	The Bread from Heaven
John 10:10	Jesus came so that we may have life abundantly
2 Corinthians 9:6-10	(Promise of God's Abundance) "He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteous- ness."
1 John 3:17-18	(Love One Another) "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth."
James 2:14-16	(Faith with good works) "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works?If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?"



The following reflections are offered as "food for thought," in preparation for worship or small group discussions.

"The Shared Table"

Artist: Esther Douglas | Website: www.estherdouglas.com | Instagram: @estherdouglasart

Artist Statement

Jesus repeatedly shared meals with many different groups of people in the Bible, from the last supper with his disciples, to his meal shared with Zacchaeus after beckoning him down from the tree; He loved to share food with people. This image of the shared table hopefully encourages us to meditate on the 'shared table,' both literal and metaphorical. How can we extend the table to others through our physical sharing of food with those who are without? How can we extend the table of prayer, to gather with others together in conversation with the Lord, committing those who are experiencing the effects of the hunger crisis to Him who knows and cares for them? This piece encourages us to think about our own 'table' and how we can share what we have in practical ways.



Esther Douglas is a young artist from Manchester, currently in her final year of her degree in Fine Art at the Glasgow School of Art.



Her work includes observational drawing and paintings made of the people around her and places she inhabits. Large scale oil paint portraits are a big part of Esther's practice and through them she hopes to communicate some of the story of the sitter. She makes paintings and prints of moments of everyday life that encourage us to pause and look more closely at the beauty that surrounds us.

Reflection By Sarah Larkin, Head of Communications and Marketing, Integral Alliance

The wonderful thing about an artwork is that it can 'speak' to people in many different and varied ways. When I first saw this thoughtful piece, I was struck by three things:

The first is the empty chair. It made me think of the 'unseen guest' that we could consider Jesus to be. There is a well-known quote that has hung in many a dining room in days gone by: 'Christ is the head of the home, the unseen guest of every meal, the silent listener to every conversation.' This might lead us to consider what we might do or say differently if indeed Christ is dining with at our table. In this, there is also the challenge of who Jesus may be asking us to invite for a meal. I recall the words from Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me ... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25: 31-46).

So, the unseen guest can be considered to be both our Lord Jesus and those who are thought of in the world's eyes, to be 'the least'.

The second thing that strikes me about the picture is the woman at the head of the table. She is the only one without food directly in front of her, and her poise is one of prayer. That brings to mind Jesus' words that we "shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We are called to trust God before all else, but also, in the face of scarcity and hunger, there is the promise of God's miraculous provision:

Jesus took the five loaves and two fishes and in blessing the meagre meal it was multiplied, and there was not just enough to go round, but 12 full baskets left over. And just like the boy who shared his meal, in our offering what we have to the Lord, we can ask Him to bless and multiply it as it is shared with others.

The third thing that strikes me is the colour contrast in the picture. Half the table and half the woman are in light and half in shade, and in the rest of the picture it is a mixture. For me this is suggestive of the fact that our world is a mixture of light and darkness and that we always have a choice to make - to see Jesus with us at our table, to trust God for what we need and to share our meal with the hungry.

The picture may also bring to mind a verse or passage from the Scriptures. The one that comes to my mind is the instruction: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). And also, the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19. Here Jesus invites himself round to Zacchaeus' house – presumably for a meal? Here is a poem I write inspired by that story:



Zacchaeus

He knew my name
That's the thing
How did he know my name?
This man passing through
Stops at my tree
And invites himself round
Nobody asks to come and see me

Ever

I was so blown away
I didn't think of the unmade bed
Or the washing up
Or the weeds springing up

All the way along the path to my Special extra-security hard-to-break-down reinforced door

Me

The man so many people hated
Abraham's son
Salvation came that day
To a house filled only with fine things
I knew by the way he looked up at me
That I would give away half of all that I owned
To the poor
It didn't matter what it cost
I was so happy
Because for the first time in my life
Ever
I wasn't lost

(Poem: Sarah Larkin)

Questions for further reflection:

- 1. What do you see in the picture? What are the main three things that strike you?
- 2. Have you had a testimony to share of God's miraculous multiplication and provision?
- 3. Do any verses or passages of Scripture come to mind as you reflect on the picture?
- 4. You might like to take time to respond to the picture creatively. Perhaps it will inspire a poem, prose reflection or picture of your own.

EXAMPLES OF ACTION

United Methodist Church's Fight Against Malnutrition in Eastern Congo

In Eastern Congo's tumultuous landscape, where conflict and displacement loom large, malnutrition poses a grave threat to the region's children. Yet, amidst these challenges, The United Methodist Church stands as a pillar of support, endeavoring to alleviate the suffering of malnourished children through its Maternal, Newborn and Child Health program. With a focus on providing nutritional supplements, medical care, and parental guidance, the church's efforts have touched the lives of over 2,300 malnourished children in 2023, offering hope and healing in the face of adversity.

Led by dedicated professionals like Dr. Marie-Claire Manafundu, the church's initiative not only addresses immediate medical needs but also delves into the root causes of malnutrition, including poverty and food insecurity. Through community outreach, volunteer groups, and psychological support networks, the church's holistic approach aims to empower families and communities, paving the way for a healthier, brighter future for the children of Eastern Congo. Though challenges persist, the church remains resolute in its mission, advocating for collaboration and mobilization to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive and fulfill their potential, free from the grip of malnutrition.

Link: Church helps thousands of malnourished children in Congo (umnews.org)

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration - Restoring crop yields, livelihoods and God-given Hope

In the narrative of Genesis, the Earth is depicted as a realm of abundance, yet in Niger Republic during the 1980s, this promise seemed distant amidst rapid desertification. However, Tony Rinaudo, through perseverance and prayer, unearthed a hidden network—a subterranean forest dormant with life. This revelation birthed Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), a technique harnessing the regenerative power of nature. Over two decades, FMNR spread, reclaiming vast swathes of land and revitalizing ecosystems at a staggering pace.

As trees reclaimed their role as keystones in the landscape, fertility returned to the soil, enabling communities to thrive once more. Tony Rinaudo's vision, rooted in faith and stewardship, empowered families to work alongside God's creation, ushering in the potential for a future of abundance where hunger yields to plenty and nutrition flourishes. Through FMNR, barren lands are transformed into flourishing oases of life, echoing the divine promise of provision and abundance for all.

Hunger Among the Wheat Fields: Patricia's Story

Patricia's nine-year-old granddaughter told her that she wanted to eat with her friends who ate breakfast at school. "They were eating at school because their families couldn't afford breakfast.

I didn't know how to explain it to her. And I know her friends' families," she said. "They're good people. Most of them are working. But I didn't know how to explain to her that their incomes just weren't enough to always buy food."

When Patricia retired, she felt called to become involved with Bread for the World through her church. When she learned more about the realities of hunger, it really hit home for her. "I live in Oklahoma," she said. "We're surrounded by cows and wheat fields. Food production is the second largest industry in Oklahoma – but we have the <u>second highest</u> food insecurity rate of any state in the country [of the United States]".

Oklahoma's children aren't the only ones facing this problem. Agriculture is the number one industry in Mississippi, but <u>more people</u> experience hunger in Mississippi than any other state. Many of the states with the highest rates of food insecurity are also populated by thousands of farms. Forty percent of Tennessee is farmland. Georgia has nearly ten million acres of farmland. Louisiana's agriculture industry is known for sweet potatoes, rice, corn and tomatoes.

But food prices are rising. Food prices increased 9.9 percent in 2022, the largest annual increase since 1979 (USDA). This means a lot of parents are making the heartbreaking decision between food and other basic needs, like housing or healthcare.

How is it possible that in this country of abundance, so many families – including those who work in food production – don't know where their next meal will come from?

Tool: Letters and Emails



The Ten Commandments of Food and the Ten Commandments of Food for Kids

The "Ten Commandments of Food" is an engaging resource that was developed through the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance / Food for Life Campaign to invite Christians into deeper reflection, dialogue, and positive action around food and hunger issues, in our local communities and around the world.

These are excellent resources for teaching about hunger related issues in a myriad of ways - as part of a sermon series, children's messages, in church school classes, small group discussions, for families to use at home, or during one's personal devotional time. The action steps within the Ten Commandments of Food encourage a greater awareness and healthy stewardship of the abundant resources God has provided for us.

LINK: <u>The Ten Commandments of Food</u> LINK: Children & Families Resources



Offering Prayer

(Option 1)

Right now is the ideal time to take up a special offering to benefit a local or global hunger related organization – and to be more involved with their efforts to end hunger. You may want to invite a representative to share with your congregation about the work they do.

After the offering is taken up, the following Offering Prayer is a good option if the "Ten Commandments of Food" is used in some way during your worship service.

Leader: God of Abundance, We give you thanks for the gift of your bountiful grace and for all the ways you provide for us. Guide us in our desire to live in greater harmony with you, with others, and with your creation. Through your grace, may our actions reflect a renewed commitment of love for our neighbors, so that all who hunger may be nourished.

All: We give thanks for the food we eat, and we ask your blessing upon local farmers and markets.

Leader: Guide us with hope as we learn how to be better stewards of food resources, how they impact our own bodies, and assure that others have access to healthy food. Help us to remain mindful of what you provide and how we use it, not taking it for granted, being wasteful, or holding onto too much.

All: We give thanks for those who labor to grow and harvest and transport our food, for those who prepare and handle our food, and for those who clean up the scraps behind us. May our love for our neighbors lead to more equitable wages and treatment of all laborers and farm workers.

Leader: Grant us the wisdom to advocate for sustainable methods of producing food that minimize damage to our environment, using land and water resources with care, and protecting the biodiversity of seeds, soil, and cultures.

All: With gratitude for your mercy and love, may we be generous in sharing the gift of food with others. AMEN!

Offering Prayer

(Option 2)

God of Abundance,

We give you thanks for the good and gracious gifts that you give to us. Help us to share with others without reservation, knowing that there is more than enough to go around.

Remind us that loving our neighbor is part of loving you, and that we can rely on you for our daily bread with each new day. May your perfect love cast away all our fears and open us up to joy of sharing the bounty of your good creation. In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

(Option 1)

Lord God,

Instill in us a sense of your justice. May we never take for granted the food that we have, nor tell ourselves that hunger is not our problem.

Help us to use the voices that we have to speak up against the many injustices that make hunger an ever-present problem.

Amen

christianaid.org.uk



Prayer of Commitment

(Option 1)

If using as a congregational prayer in unison, you may wish to change "I" to "we"

O God, when I have food,

help me to remember the hungry.

When I have work,

help me to remember the jobless.

When I have a home,

help me to remember those who have no home at all.

When I am without pain,

help me to remember those who suffer,

And remembering,

help me to destroy my complacency.

Bestir my compassion,

and be concerned enough to help

By word and deed,

those who cry out for what we take for granted.

Amen.

Samuel F. Pugh (d. 1922)

Prayer of Commitment

(Option 2)

Leader: May we always be hungry for righteousness;

All: To overcome injustices that bring about hunger!

Leader: May we always be hungry for peace;

All: To overcome insecurity, suffering and displacement!

Leader: May we always yearn to care for each other and the environment;

All: That the earth will remain abundant for all creation! Amen.

World Council of Churches / Food for Life Campaign, 2016

Benediction

Go forth and share food with the hungry.

Go forth and provide the wanderer a shelter.

God will guide you always, and you will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen

