

# bread

BREAD FOR THE WORLD  
is a collective Christian voice  
urging our nation's decision  
makers to end hunger  
at home and abroad

January 2011 | [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)



Leslie Duss

## Critical Improvements for Hungry People

December 2 was a historic day for Bread for the World—we had twin wins on our legislative agenda. The House of Representatives passed two bills back-to-back to help Americans at risk of hunger.

Early that afternoon, the House passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act—a five-year renewal of child nutrition programs. The bill had already been approved by the Senate; it was signed into law by President Obama on December 13.

### Hunger-Free Kids Act Now Law

“It’s extremely rewarding to know that hungry kids in America will do so much better because of this win,” said Monica Mills, Bread for the World’s director of government relations.

Immediately after that, the House passed the Middle Class Tax Relief Act of 2010, which included tax credits for low-income workers. The bill protected the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC)—goals of Bread’s 2010 Offering of Letters.

The reauthorization of child nutrition programs—at \$4.5 billion over 10 years—is the largest such increase for these programs. The renewal passed

(See **Improvements** on Page 2)

### ACT NOW!

As the new 112th Congress begins, urge your members of Congress to take advantage of opportunities to reduce hunger in the United States and around the world.

Points to make:

- One in eight Americans now receives SNAP (food stamp) benefits—so please support both national nutrition programs and efforts to help families earn enough to get by.
- Globally, 925 million people are hungry—so please pass legislation that will help farmers in poor countries produce more food.

Sen. \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. House of Representatives  
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HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

# IMPROVEMENTS

from page 1



Bread activists reminded Congress that hungry kids live in every part of the United States.

Crista Friedli

in 2004 included an increase of just \$487 million over 10 years.

This victory was possible because Bread members have advocated faithfully for the past two years to keep children and their needs constantly before Congress. They offered real-world examples of children who will benefit from the new legislation. They include:

- The students that Laura, an elementary school teacher in Milwaukee, thinks of when she says, “I don’t know if most Americans realize that there are kids relying on school for every meal.”
- Elijah, 10, who walks a mile each way, seven days a week, through a barren part of his Alabama town to get dinner from a charity mission for himself, his disabled mother, and his two younger brothers.

Bread activists reminded members of Congress that kids like these live in every part of our country.

Aside from the large increase in funding, the new law contains many of the provisions that Bread advocated to improve access and participation:

- a grant program for schools to improve their breakfast programs;
- grants to help summer meal sites continue to provide free meals to eligible children;
- an expansion of after-school supper programs nationwide;
- a provision to enable schools in high-poverty areas to serve free meals to all students rather than requiring an application for each child;

- a pilot effort to provide more free school meals to children in need by automatically enrolling kids who receive Medicaid (all of whom meet income eligibility guidelines);
- increased reimbursement to schools for the meals they serve—contingent on improvements in the quality of the meals.

“This legislation is an early Christmas gift for hungry children,” said Bread President David Beckmann. “Thanks to all Bread members who advocated for the reauthorization of these programs.”

## Tax Credits for Low-Income Working Families

After nearly a year of advocacy by Bread members and activists, Bread achieved the goals of its 2010 Offering of Letters. In December, Congress passed The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010, which prevents low-income working families from seeing their current Earned Income Tax (EITC) and Child Tax Credits (CTC) reduced or eliminated.

The House passed the Senate’s version of the tax bill on December 16. The Senate bill was the result of a negotiated agreement between the White House and congressional leaders; its provisions extend all the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for two years. Thus, the tax credits for low-income working families would be kept in place through the end of 2012.

“People of faith may not agree with all of the provisions of the bill, but these low-income tax credits are a huge victory for working families,” said Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. “The EITC and CTC, along with the payroll tax deduction, will prevent 2.4 million people, including 1.2 million children, from falling into poverty.”

Without passage of the extension, the EITC and CTC provisions would have expired on December 31, 2010. Currently, a full-time minimum-wage worker with two children lives well below the poverty line, with an annual income of less than \$16,000. Without the CTC extension, this family would have received almost \$1,500 less through the CTC—money that is clearly needed for food and other basic necessities.

Please visit [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) for updated information. Thank you to all who helped advocate to make these key tax provisions an essential component of the tax package.

## Evidencing the Spirit of the Lord

## Doing the Work of Christmas

by Rev. Bob Terry



Courtesy of Bob Terry

Bethlehem's star has been packed away for another year. So have the costumes used by the shepherds and the wise men. Celebrating Christmas is past.

Now it is time to do the work of Christmas.

It is time to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom to the captive, to announce healing for the blind and release to the oppressed. That is how the Baby of Christmas described his adult ministry in Luke 4:18-19. The reason? Because "The Spirit of the Lord is on me," Jesus said.

Reflecting on this passage, one preacher noted that the evidence of God's presence in one's life is not "how high you jump" but "how straight you walk." The presence of God is not evidenced by indulging one's self but in giving one's self away in concern for others.

The Bible is unmistakably clear. Proverbs 29:7 states, "The righteous care about justice for the poor but the wicked have no such concern."

The Old Testament shows God promoting a system that called for the community to help meet the needs of the poor. Amos, the prophet from Tekoa, condemned Judah because the society cheated and abused the poor and powerless. By their actions, the people of Judah demonstrated the absence of

the Spirit of the Lord and needed to repent, Amos declared.

Jesus announced this same principle in Matthew 25:31. He invited the righteous into his everlasting kingdom because they had fed the hungry, cared for the homeless, clothed the naked, nursed the sick, and remembered the prisoner.

The ungodly were cast out precisely because they had not done these things.

The first group evidenced the Spirit of the Lord. The second did not. The actions of both demonstrated that "the righteous care about justice for the poor but the wicked have no such concern."

The latest U.S. Department of Agriculture data on food insecurity confirmed that almost one in eight American families (14.7 percent) struggle with hunger—about 45 million people. USDA said that food insecurity in the United States stands at the highest level since the government started tracking it.

Food insecurity held steady between 2000 and 2007 at about 10 percent. But the economic downturn has forced more people to seek assistance. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps) had an increase in participation of 18.7 percent. Participation in the free school lunch program jumped by 5.4 percent and in WIC by 5.8 percent.

Worldwide, hunger is growing again after decades of decline. Experts estimate that high food prices have resulted in more hungry people than at any other time in the past decade.

Unfortunately, the same economic problems that caused a jump in the number of hungry people are causing some countries, including the United States, to consider cutting back on help for the hungry.

Thankfully, Bread for the World is here to advocate justice for the poor. Bread shares the concerns of those interested in getting the greatest benefit from our aid. That is why Bread supports the reform of U.S. foreign aid. Bread cares about the health of mothers and infants. That is why Bread fights malnutrition at home and around the world. Bread cares about hungry families. That is why Bread urges adequate funding for SNAP and similar programs.

Bread's work for the hungry and poor is evidence of the Spirit of the Lord. And your work for poor and hungry people is evidence of the Spirit's presence on you, too.

*Bob Terry serves on Bread for the World's board. He is publisher and editor of The Alabama Baptist and an executive committee member of the Baptist World Alliance.*



## Make a Resolution to Give Monthly

This year, resolve to join the growing number of Bread members who are working to end hunger through regular monthly gifts. This dedicated group of more than 4,000 members belongs to our Baker's Dozen program and makes monthly gifts via credit card or electronic funds transfer. For just \$10 a month, your monthly gifts will provide a predictable stream of financial support that enables Bread to make efficient plans for the future. The money saved in gift processing, membership reminders, and administrative costs equals the value of a 13th monthly gift—a baker's dozen.

Please consider joining this cost-effective program to sustain our work on behalf of hungry people. For more information or to join Baker's Dozen, call 1-800-822-7323 or visit [www.bread.org/go/bakersdozen](http://www.bread.org/go/bakersdozen).

### Lenten Prayers for Hungry People

Readings, prayers, and actions to help you observe Lent in 2011—prepared by Bread for the World

First Week in Lent March 13–19

#### Jesus Sends Satan Away

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Palm 32  
Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart. — *Palm 32:11*

Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan, for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" — *Matthew 4:10*

All scripture readings are from the New Revised Standard Version, © The Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in the United States of America. The readings are those appointed by the Common Lectionary for each of the Sundays in Lent.

#### PRAYER:

O God, in our baptism we are joined with Christ who endured all the temptations and trials of human life. As we follow Christ during Lent, instill in us the love for all our neighbors, especially those without enough to eat. Amen.

#### ACTION:

During Lent, many Christians give up some favorite food. Others participate in special fasts as a way to remember those who are hungry. You may prefer to fast for just one day—or simply skip one meal. Contribute the money you save to your church or denomination's hunger appeal.

✦ Fold this "table tent" along the lines and insert the tab through the slot. Fold backwards for the Fourth and Fifth Weeks of Lent and Holy Week.

## Lenten Resources

Ash Wednesday is March 9, and again this year Lenten Prayers for Hungry People will be mailed to Bread for the World members. This 6 x 9 inch "table tent" includes scripture readings, prayers, and actions for each of the five weeks of Lent as well as Holy Week. Individuals and churches may order additional copies of the printed table tent free of charge. Visit [www.bread.org/go/lent](http://www.bread.org/go/lent) to view the prayers and place your order. You may also request to have an email version of Lenten Prayers sent to you each week.

In addition, many churches have special studies or Christian Education classes during Lent. The Christian Study Guide that accompanies Bread for the World Institute's 2011 Hunger Report offers six sessions of biblical themes and activities related to the contents of the report. Download the report and study guide at [www.bread.org/hungerreport](http://www.bread.org/hungerreport).

## We Have Moved!

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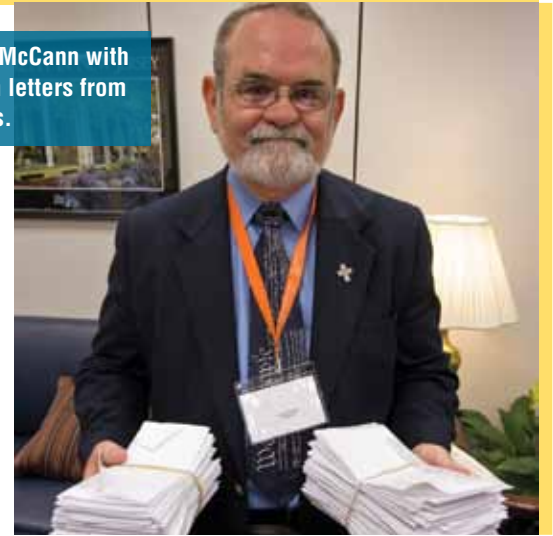
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## Save the Date for the 2011 Gathering

From June 11-14, 2011, we will convene in Washington, DC, for our National Gathering. It will focus on the theme "Changing the Politics of Hunger." The National Gathering consists of three major events: the Gathering proper (June 11-12), a special international conference on ending child malnutrition (June 13), and Lobby Day (June 14). More details will be available soon. Join us for the entire Gathering!

Bread member Frank McCann with dozens of handwritten letters from New Jersey advocates.



Jim Stipe

**Constituent letters are noticed**

**Handwritten Letters:  
Still the Most Effective Way  
to Reach Congress**

Most Americans now use email or other quick ways of getting in touch with businesses and friends. Urging members of Congress to end hunger is one of the few occasions all year when Bread members and other people of faith actually write and mail a letter.

Are handwritten letters still one of the best ways to reach your representative and senators? Bread activists and congressional staff who speak from experience confirm that next to face-to-face meetings, letters from constituents of the member of Congress are incredibly effective.

Why? The answer is largely “quality versus quantity.” It’s easy to send thousands of copies of a single email or letter to a congressional office. When it comes to gauging constituent opinion, staff members simply give less weight to communications that are or could be mass-produced.

After meetings on Capitol Hill, Bread activists and staff frequently report that members of Congress and aides have noted specifically the letters they receive from individual Bread members or through Offerings of Letters.

A recent example: in late October 2010, a group of Bread members and

faith leaders from the Indianapolis area met with the office of Rep. Andre Carson (D-IN). Carson’s district director said that Bread’s 2010 campaign on tax credits for low-income working families, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit, was the most striking he had seen on any issue during the year.

He was impressed that the letters were all individually written rather than just signed form letters or postcards and emphasized that personal, handwritten letters make the most impact. Some letters are given directly to the representative to read.

“In turn, we were really impressed ourselves—both that our letters had gotten so much attention, and that our local organizing work was enough to make Bread’s campaign the most-voiced issue of the year,” wrote participants Larry Lindley and Dave Miner.

Bread’s presence is strong in Indianapolis, home to more than 40 very active members plus a number of churches, all of whom help mobilize grassroots action on our issues. But there are Bread members in every congressional district in the country; even districts with far fewer activist

leaders still have the power to send a strong message to their elected representatives.

It’s difficult to identify a “magic number” of handwritten letters needed to raise the profile of an issue. But several current and former congressional staff told Bread that their offices open a folder and begin tracking a topic more closely once they’ve received just five to seven letters—a number well within the reach of a small Bread group or a church or campus Offering of Letters.

Research on the views of congressional staff carried out by the Congressional Management Foundation also supports Bread’s approach.

In addition to noting that quality is more persuasive than quantity, the foundation says that advocacy groups should develop a good understanding of how Congress works and build credibility as an organization that understands the difference between “being noticed” and “having an impact” on Congress. This is how we can make the most of each of our grassroots voices.

John Condie (right), co-chair of the social ministry committee at Christ the King Lutheran Church, hand-delivers letters from parishioners to their senator's local office.

Bread is asking for your voice

## Durango, CO: 'Our Voices Bubble Up'



Jigger Staby

"I tell our church members [that] right now, Bread for the World is not asking for your money. It's simpler than that—and more powerful," says Jigger Staby, a member of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Durango, CO. "They are asking for your voice."

Staby says she enjoys connecting parishioners at Christ the King with issues outside the church doors. She and John Condie, co-chairs of the church's social ministry committee, encourage members to be active in Bread's work to end hunger. This year for the first time, the church's Offering of Letters featured a DVD from Bread at all three weekly services.

For nearly a decade now, members of the parish have hand-delivered their letters to the local office of their representative in Congress. Staby reports that congressional staff members appreciate hearing from the church every year and praise Bread for the World's materials.

She is quick to point out the importance of Rev. John Knutson's support for Bread and the church's other helping ministries. "Our voices bubble up from the bottom. But when

Pastor John weaves advocacy into his sermon, he sends a gentle yet powerful message," she says.

The pastor says he is blessed to be in a congregation like Christ the King, where the issue is understood and people love to participate in letter-writing. "Helping people is in their DNA," Pastor John said.

Staby has many stories of the enthusiastic response of fellow parishioners. One year, a woman and her two sons visited a table set up by the social ministry committee that offered information on Bread for the World and the Offering of Letters.

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**"Helping people is in their DNA."**

**– Rev. John Knutson**

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"One of the sons just lit up," Staby remembers. "He got it, that he could talk to people who matter about hunger. He wrote a letter right then and there, and received one in return. That made a big impact!" Inspired by such examples,

the committee plans to work with the church's new youth director to involve young people more deeply in action to end hunger.

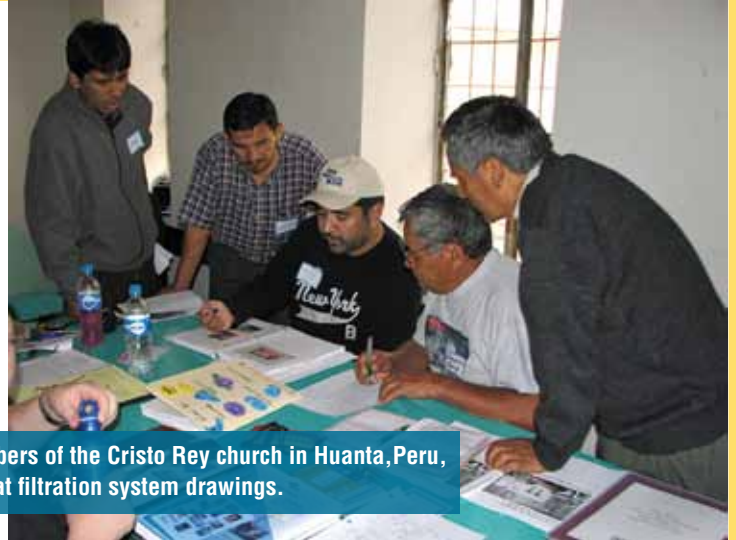
The church's social ministry committee has also led the way in getting other local churches involved. Christ the King's efforts have spurred an anti-hunger campaign from other Lutheran churches in Colorado, "and now our local Unitarian Universalist Church is doing hunger advocacy," Staby adds.

In addition to its advocacy, education, and outreach efforts, each year the church allocates a percentage of its budget to local, domestic, and international anti-hunger efforts. Bread is among the beneficiaries of the congregation's generosity—another dimension of Christ the King's anti-hunger commitment.

Matt Newell-Ching, Bread for the World's western regional organizer, praises the dedication of Staby, Condie, and their fellow advocates, saying, "If we had five churches like Christ the King in every congressional district in the country, we'd be a lot closer to ending hunger in our time."

### Community-led projects

# Bread Members ‘In the Field’: Partnerships and Clean Water



Members of the Cristo Rey church in Huanta, Peru, look at filtration system drawings.

Wendy Gist

Bread for the World continues to press for improvements in U.S. development assistance to make it more effective in reducing poverty. A top priority is to ensure that programs actually meet the needs of the local community.

Many Bread members, including Barbara Miller and Wendy Gist, have hands-on experience with such community-led projects. Miller has been visiting Dongobesh in northern Tanzania since the 1990s, while Gist has made several trips recently to Huanta in central Peru. Their experiences illustrate how a more inclusive approach to development assistance can lead to concrete, sustainable results for hungry and poor people.

In both communities, people are trying to solve a big community problem: lack of clean water.

“People [in Dongobesh] mainly rely on water from the river, but you can barely see the river in the dry season,” says Miller, whose synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) partners with Lutheran churches in the Dongobesh area. “What is most visible instead is

a bunch of hand-dug holes, the size of loveseats, which create shallow wells where people scoop up water.”

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**“We actually sign a covenant with each community so we all understand who is doing what.”**

**– Wendy Gist**

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Before their first visit to Peru, Gist and others working with San Gabriel Presbytery in Pasadena, CA, received training from Living Waters for the World, a mission resource of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Living Waters specializes in helping communities clean up available but contaminated water sources. Gist learned the basics of assessing water quality and determining whether a filtration system would work in particular situations.

In Huanta, Gist said, “I enjoyed getting to know people and talking to them informally about what kinds of things they want for their community. For many people, our project was somewhat of a new experience—rather

than a donor planning a program and giving them money, they themselves would be building and maintaining the water system and educating the community, with U.S. technical assistance and help in fundraising. We actually sign a covenant with each community so that we all understand who is doing what.”

Miller’s project includes a similar covenant. “In our companion synod program through the ELCA,” she says, “we’re working to break the traditional mold of ‘We are rich Americans and we will decide what you want and give you money, because you are poor and have nothing to offer.’”

Recently, a group from Miller’s church, Faith Lutheran Church in Washington, MI, committed to working with the Dongobesh community on a water project. But project planning is up to local people like Yoram, who recently wrote to Miller and her colleagues to explain what the community wants to achieve. One of Miller’s roles is to help members of Yoram’s community prioritize their potential solutions so they can focus their energy on the idea with the greatest potential.

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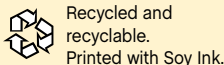
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## Research to End Hunger

The Norman Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative, launched June 2010 by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, brings the resources of USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture together to address problems faced by smallholder farmers. The planned research includes:



**Wheat:** The stem rust disease causes damage of up to \$9 billion a year. New resistant varieties of wheat have been developed and will be delivered in regions vulnerable to the disease (which include Ethiopia and parts of the Middle East and South Asia).



**Maize:** Maize varieties that tolerate drought well are increasingly important because of climate change. Up to 4 million people could escape poverty when drought-tolerant varieties replace the current varieties.



**Rice:** Climate change is making rice crops more vulnerable to floods. Flood-resistant strains of rice are now being developed through a partnership between the University of California-Davis and the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines.



**Livestock:** The tick-borne disease East Coast Fever kills 1 million cattle every year in Africa. Making vaccines available will especially benefit pastoralists, who often live in areas where the only plants that grow are cattle fodder like grass and shrubbery.