

2023 Lenten Prayers for an End to Hunger

Readings, prayers, and actions to help you observe Lent in 2023—prepared by Bread for the World

First Week in Lent | February 26 – March 4

Jesus is Tempted in the Wilderness

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

Steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

—*Psalm 32:10b*

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

—*Matthew 4:1-2*



PRAY

O God, we give thanks that Jesus suffered the temptations and trials of human life so that we might be freed from all the forces of evil. As we follow Christ during this season of Lent, may we be instruments of your love for all people, especially those who without enough to eat. *Amen.*

ACT

During the 40 days (not including Sundays) of Lent, many Christians give up some favorite food. Others participate in fasts as a way to remember those who are hungry. You may prefer to fast for just one day a week—or skip one meal. Contribute the money you save to your church or denomination's hunger appeal.

Jesus Invites Us to be Born Anew

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

—*Psalm 121:1-2*

Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.... And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

—*John 3:5, 14-15*

PRAY

O Christ, in the midst of darkness and despair, may we be sustained by your light and life. Grant that your saving power inspire us to create hope and opportunity for those who live in hunger and poverty.
Amen.

REFLECT

In this year’s cycle of readings for Lent, John’s Gospel is used prominently. In these readings, we see Jesus as the new Moses who will lead God’s people in a new exodus—this time with living water (of baptism) and the bread of life (in the Eucharist) that triumphs over death. Jesus promises eternal life—life that is self-giving and self-renewing.



The woodcuts throughout Lenten Prayers for an End to Hunger were created by the artist Helen Siegl, a longtime Bread for the World member.

All scripture passages 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 for Year A in Revised Common Lectionary for each of the Sundays in Lent.

Jesus Offers Living Water

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

O come, let us sing to the Lord,
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

—*Psalm 95:1*

Jesus said to [the woman at the well],
“Everyone who drinks of this water will
be thirsty again, but those who drink of
the water that I will give them will never
be thirsty. The water that I will give
will become in them a spring of water
gushing up to eternal life.”

—*John 4:13-14*



PRAY

O God, we rejoice that by our faith in Jesus we have received the living water of eternal life. May your abundant grace move us to support those who work to make clean water available to all the world's people. *Amen.*

ACT

Because of climate change, water has become both scarce and overabundant—causing both severe droughts and flooding. Those already struggling with hunger are feeling the impact the most. This Lent, perhaps you and your church can learn more about the links between climate change and hunger. Visit [Bread.org/Climate](https://bread.org/climate) to learn more and take action.

Bread for the World's 2023 Offering of Letters urges Congress to reauthorize the Farm Bill and improve nutrition programs in our own country as well international food assistance. Visit [Bread.org/OL](https://bread.org/OL) or call 1-800-822-7323 to find out how you and your congregation can participate in this far-reaching effort.

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

—*Psalm 23:6*

[The blind man answered], “Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

—*John 9:32-33*



PRAY

O God, for those who follow Jesus, all things are possible. We pray that our nation’s leaders may not close their eyes and hearts to those in need but rather change the policies and conditions that allow hunger to persist. *Amen.*

ACT

Most Americans are “blind” to what a small percentage of the federal budget is actually devoted to reducing poverty and hunger overseas—and to the essential role our government plays in feeding people here in the United States. Invite a representative from a local food pantry to visit your church to talk about the sources for the food they distribute.

Bread for the World is a Christian advocacy organization urging decision makers to support policies and programs to end hunger here in the United States and around the world. Working through churches, campuses, and other organizations, we equip and inspire people of faith to persuade Congress to pass legislation that helps end hunger. Bread for the World is sustained by generous contributions from individuals and families.

Jesus Calls Lazarus Back to Life



Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive to the voice
of my supplications!

—*Psalm 130:1-2*

Jesus said to [Martha], “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.”

—*John 11:25*

PRAY

O God, you hear our cry and you raise us up to new life in Christ Jesus. You release us from all the fears that binds us. Grant that we may persist in calling on our elected officials to do more to reduce hunger and poverty in our own country and abroad. *Amen.*

ACT

Take just a few minutes this week to write brief letters to your members Congress. Urge them to support policies to reduce and end hunger. Visit Bread.org/Act to learn more.



425 3rd Street SW, Suite 1200

Washington, DC 20024

800.822.7323 Bread.org

Jesus Gives Up His Life on the Cross

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Philippians 2:5-11

Psalm 31:9-16
Matthew 26:14-27:66

These are the Scripture readings appointed for Passion Sunday/Palm Sunday.

Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.

—*Psalm 31:16*

Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice
and breathed his last. At that moment,
the curtain of the temple was torn in two,
from top to bottom. The earth shook,
and the rocks were split.

—*Matthew 27:50-51*



PRAY

O Jesus, you willingly gave yourself up to be crucified for us and all people. May we be strengthened by your amazing grace and endless mercy to dedicate ourselves to putting an end to the causes of hunger and poverty.
Amen.

ACT

On Easter, we celebrate that we, who are buried with Christ, are raised with him to new life. One way to express this new life in Christ is to join others in ongoing prayers for an end to hunger. To make that commitment and receive prayer suggestions every other week, visit **Bread.org/Prayer**.

To become a member of Bread for the World and learn more about how you can help end hunger, visit **Bread.org** or call **1-800-822-7323**.