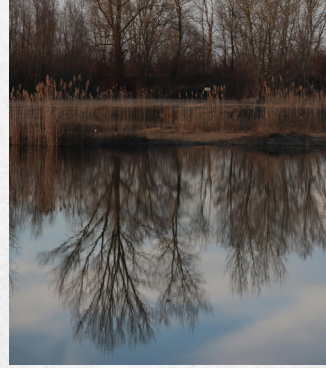




Come *to the* Table

A Bread for the World Lenten Devotional

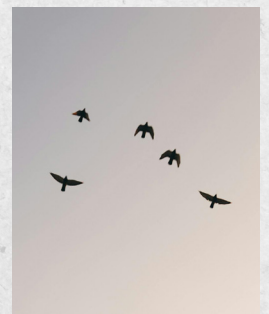


Table of Contents

About Us.....03

Join Us.....04



Ash Wednesday.....06

Come to the Table of **Grace**



First Sunday of Lent.....08

Come to the Table of **Promise**



Second Sunday of Lent.....10

Come to the Table of **Transformation**



Third Sunday of Lent.....12

Come to the Table of **Repentance**



Fourth Sunday of Lent.....14

Come to the Table of **Reconciliation**



Fifth Sunday of Lent.....16

Come to the Table of **of New Life**



Palm/Passion Sunday.....18

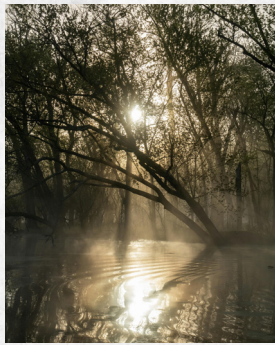
Come to the Table of **Welcome**



About Us

At Bread for the World, our mission is to educate and equip people to advocate for policies and programs that can help end hunger. Our faith in Christ is the foundation of our efforts and compels us to love our neighbors near and far. There are more than **700 million people** experiencing hunger around the world every day. Not only are people in need of food, but there's a global hunger for justice, equity, and security. This is why our work is grounded in the hope of Christ's salvation in our lives and in the world.





Join Us

Lent is a time for deep personal and communal reflection. It is an opportunity for us to set ourselves apart from the world and to commune with God. We will invite you to join us in a journey that prepares us for Christ's death and resurrection through meditation on scripture, reflection, spiritual practices, and gathering around God's table.

Inspiration for this theme – ***Come to the Table*** – comes from the song "Come to the Table of Grace" by Barbara Hamm, available at [Hope Publishing](#).



Our Journey

Our journey in this Lenten season begins at the table of grace where we are invited to penitence and opening our hearts to be cleansed by God. We move to the table of promise, where we are invited to trust in the Lord. We come to the table of transformation next, where we are invited to be courageous in the face of so much mystery in the world around us. On the third Sunday, we come to the table of repentance, where we are invited to change our minds—to open our minds and be aligned with the mind of Christ. At the table of reconciliation, we are invited to speak the truth. We come then to the table of new life, where we are invited to let go of the past. Finally, on Palm/Passion Sunday, we come to the table of welcome, where we are invited to practice radical hospitality with one another.

Each week you will find a scripture on which to meditate, a reflection to read, a practice to engage, and an element for a table setting—each piece inviting you to go deeper. You might gather as a community around a table, collecting the elements each week. Or you might set aside a space in your home to gather with God at a table each week. If you are using this piece to inform your worship service, you might bring each element to the communion table or altar in the worship space.

A special word about Bread for the World's **Offering of Letters**, an annual campaign that engages churches, campuses, and other faith communities in writing personalized letters to Congress on issues related to hunger in the U.S. and around the world. This year we celebrate Bread for the World's **50th Anniversary**. As we reflect on the legacy of the Bread for the World community, we remember that in the early years of the organization, churches participated in the Offering of Letters as a Lenten practice. We have written this devotional to both follow the lectionary text and create practices that would support the church in participating in the Offering of Letters.

We hope that you will consider participating in an Offering of Letters this year. Letter writing would be especially appropriate for the fourth week of Lent but would also work well on week five and for Palm/Passion Sunday. To learn more about how to write a letter individually, please visit bread.org/act. To lead an offering of letters in your church or community, visit bread.org/ol.

On behalf of Bread for the World staff, we wish you a thoughtful and meaningful Lent.



– Rev. Nancy Neal

Rev. Nancy Neal is the Minister for Spiritual Formation and Wellness at Bread for the World, where she works to create a culture grounded in Christian practice. She is an ordained PC(USA) pastor and has spent her career working to alleviate social inequalities. See her detailed biography at <https://www.bread.org/bio/nancy-neal/>.



ASH WEDNESDAY

Grace



come to the table of Grace

March 5, 2025 | Practice: **Penitence**

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 51:1-17

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. –Psalm 51:1-2 (NRSVUE)



TABLE ELEMENT

Bowl of Water

We begin our Lenten journey on **Ash Wednesday** sitting at the table of grace. Lent is a time for journeying inward and preparing our hearts for the death and resurrection of our beloved teacher, Jesus. We turn with penitent hearts to God, confessing with the psalmist, "wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." We do this trusting in God's steadfast love and abundant mercy. Too often we gather around tables where many are excluded. We see tables where our neighbors are gathered without enough to sustain everyone. When contentment with the way things are grows inside us, we seek clean hearts that long for justice.

LENTEN PRACTICE

Our Lenten practice this week is penitence. In our advocacy, we can bring a spirit of penitence.

- *What might we do to make ourselves advocates for an end to hunger?*
- *What do we need to learn?*
- *What do we need to do to practice?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: Trusting in your steadfast love,

Exhale: I offer my heart to you, O God.



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Promise



come to the table of Promise

March 9, 2025 | Practice: **Trusting the Lord**

DEUTERONOMY 26:1-11

When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. – Deuteronomy 26:6-9 (NRSVUE)



TABLE ELEMENT

Anointing Oil

At the table of promise, we remember God's faithfulness in keeping promises. Through Moses, God brought the Israelites to freedom from their suffering under the Pharaoh's harsh rule. And God prepared for them a land flowing with milk and honey. We, too, have seen God's promises fulfilled in our own lives. Even in the times when it seems like we are laboring or wandering in the wilderness, we put our trust in a God who remains faithful in mercy, faithful in justice, and faithful in keeping promises.

LENTEN PRACTICE

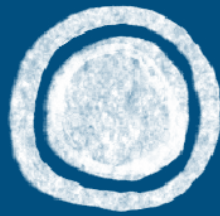
We trust that God longs for an end to hunger. We trust that there will be a time when God's abundance will be shared among all people. Therefore, our Lenten practice this week is to trust in God's promise of an exodus from hunger.

- *When have you seen God's faithfulness in your life?*
- *What does trust in God look like for you?*
- *What are some ways you can lean into that trust this week?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: I hear your call to end hunger

Exhale: and I put my trust in you.



SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Transformation



come to the table of Transformation

March 16, 2025 | Practice: **Patience in the Face of Mystery**

LUKE 9:28-43

Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah," not realizing what he was saying. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" –Luke 9:33-35 (NRSVUE)



TABLE ELEMENT

Plate

At the table of transformation, we sit with patience in the face of mystery and the unknown around us. Like Peter and the disciples with him, who try to make sense of what is happening around them, we are invited to sit in the unknown in our lives. We don't always know the meaning of what we see, but sometimes we need to sit and patiently soak it in. And in the sitting, we might hear God's voice telling us to listen to Jesus.

LENTEN PRACTICE

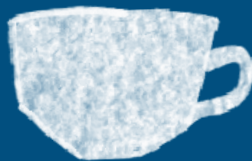
We don't always understand why things happen in our politics, in our movements, and in our lives. Our practice this week is to sit patiently in the mystery of the unknown and wait to hear from Jesus.

- *How might you practice seeing the unknown as mystery?*
- *What does practicing patience look like?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: I see the unknown as mystery

Exhale: and I hold it with patience.



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Repentance



come to the table of Repentance

March 23, 2025 | Practice: **Changing Our Minds**

LUKE 13:1-9

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the man working in the vineyard, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"
—Luke 13:6-9 (NRSVUE)



TABLE ELEMENT



Cup

At the table of repentance, we hold the tension of what is and what we hope can be. We open ourselves to seeing things in new ways, to a change in heart and mind. In times of uncertainty and disappointment, we might hold on to certainty or make decisions that will give us certainty. The landowner decided to cut down the tree that was not bearing fruit because it was wasting resources. But the gardener invited him to change his mind—to let the uncertainty remain as the gardener tended the tree for another year. Our Savior invites us to let our lives be tended by the Gardener for some time so that we can soften our hearts and minds and let go of the certainty we long for.

LENTEN PRACTICE

In working to end hunger, we can't always see that we are making a difference. And sometimes the goal seems impossible to reach. Our practice this week is to press on faithfully, to soften our hearts and minds, and let the Gardener tend to them, so that we might be open to change.

- *What does it feel like to soften our hearts or our minds?*
- *What might you do to create space for the Gardener to tend your heart and mind?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: I let my life be tended by the Gardener,

Exhale: so that I might be open to change.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Reconciliation



come to the table of Reconciliation

March 30, 2025 | Practice: **Speaking the Truth**

LUKE 15:1-3,11B-32

I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.
—Luke 15:18-20 (NRSVUE)



TABLE ELEMENT

Letters

At the table of reconciliation, we speak the truth about who we are and what is happening in the world. We do this in the hope that we can restore relationships among ourselves. We recognize that it takes a certain level of vulnerability to name what is true—of ourselves and the brokenness around us. And it takes vulnerability to welcome that truth with openness. We see this in the prodigal son who comes asking for help after he has squandered the father's wealth. And we see it in the father who opens his arms and celebrates the return of the lost son.

LENTEN PRACTICE

Our practice this week is to name the brokenness in our world that is hunger. We bring that vulnerability and humility as we write letters to our members of Congress – sharing the stories of our neighbors near and far who face food insecurity.

- *How will you engage in speaking the truth?*
- *Will you organize an Offering of Letters?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: I offer my voice,

Exhale: speaking the truth of our world.

If you would like to coordinate an **Offering of Letters** in your community or write a letter to Congress as part of an online Offering of Letters, visit bread.org/ol.



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

New Life



come to the table of **New Life**

April 6, 2025 | Practice: **Letting Go of the Past**

ISAIAH 43:16-21

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. –Isaiah 43:18-19 (NRSVUE)



TABLE ELEMENT

Bread

At the table of new life, we focus our attention on how God is moving now. We remove the blinders of the past and contend with the reality in front of us. And we trust that in the new circumstances, God will provide a path toward justice and peace in this world. We put our energy and imagination into finding new tools and using old tools in new ways. We trust that God is working through us to make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

LENTEN PRACTICE

In our work to end hunger, we can be caught in old paradigms and old models of understanding the world around us. Our practice this week is to let go of the old and see the world around us with clear eyes.

- *What has changed in the world around us?*
- *What has emerged that we haven't noticed before?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: Letting go of the past,

Exhale: I open my eyes to what is new.



PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

Welcome



come to the table of **Welcome**

April 13, 2025 | Practice: **Radical Hospitality**

LUKE 22:14-27

But not so with you; rather, the greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.
—Luke 22:26-27 (NRSVUE)



TABLE ELEMENT

Wine

In between the crowd that cheers Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a colt with cries of Hosanna and Hallelujah and the crowd deserting Jesus in his trial, we find ourselves at the table of welcome. Jesus is gathered with his closest friends and disciples, fully aware of how they will abandon and betray him in the next 24 hours. And he chooses in that moment to serve them—to wash their feet and to serve them bread and wine. Jesus does this to demonstrate that a leader is ultimately one who serves. He encourages them to serve one another. He welcomes them to the table so that they might welcome others.

LENTEN PRACTICE

Our Bread for the World table is a table of welcome. This week, our practice is radical hospitality.

- *How might we ensure that the voices of those in the margins are heard at the tables of power?*
- *How might we ensure that tables that are empty get filled?*
- *How might we invite new people to our tables?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: I use my voice

Exhale: to expand the tables.

COME TO THE TABLE

