



PHP POST

Winter 2013 | Presbyterian Hunger Program | pcusa.org/hunger

Season of Intentionality

LITANY FOR THANKSGIVING

David Gambrell, Associate for Worship, Office of Theology and Worship, PC(USA), David also serves as editor of Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts (pcusa.org/calltoworship).

This litany is designed for use at a Thanksgiving meal. Note that it has two sections, one to be used before the meal and one after. The leader/response parts (based on Psalm 136:1 and Luke 6:21) are short and simple enough that they may be taught just before each part of the litany; only the leader(s) will need the printed page. Brief times of silence may be included at each ellipsis (...) for individual prayers of thanksgiving and intercession.

Before the meal:

To God, the Holy One, giver of grace,
we lift our hearts in gratitude:

For the blessings of creation . . .
for sun and soil, for water and air,
and all the gifts of the earth:
Give thanks to God, who is good,
whose love endures forever.

For the blessings of human labor . . .
for those who worked to grow this food
and those who prepared it for our table:
Give thanks to God, who is good,
whose love endures forever.

For the blessing of this meal . . .
for food enough to share with others
and time to enjoy it together:
Give thanks to God, who is good,
whose love endures forever.

For the blessing of family and friends . . .
for all who are gathered in this place
and all whom we hold in our hearts:
Give thanks to God, who is good,
whose love endures forever.

For all these things, thanks be to God,
through Jesus Christ our Savior,
living bread for the life of the world.
Amen.

After the meal:

To God, the Holy One, giver of grace,
we lift our hearts in prayer:

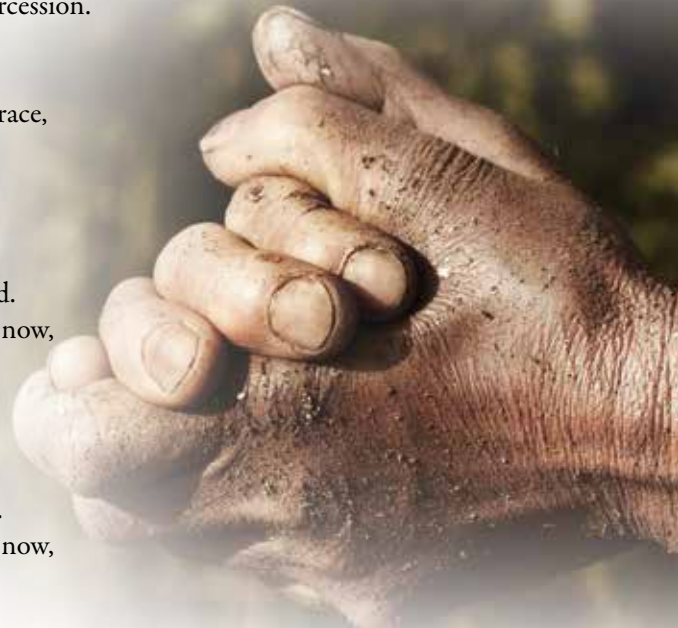
For the healing of creation . . .
Satisfy the longing of the earth
to be renewed, restored, redeemed.
Blessed are those who are hungry now,
for they will be filled.

For justice and equity . . .
Satisfy the desires of all people
for fairness, dignity, and freedom.
Blessed are those who are hungry now,
for they will be filled.

For people who are poor . . .
Satisfy the needs of those who wait
for shelter, clothing, and daily bread.
Blessed are those who are hungry now,
for they will be filled.

For peace in every place . . .
Satisfy the hope of every nation
for a world without violence and war.
Blessed are those who are hungry now,
for they will be filled.

For all these things, we pray to God,
through Jesus Christ our Savior,
living bread for the life of the world.
Amen.



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Letter From the Coordinator

By Ruth Farrell, Coordinator Presbyterian Hunger Program

We enter the time of parallel worlds – the Season of Advent and Christmas (The first Sunday of Advent through Epiphany) are also the Season of Shopping (black Friday through After-Christmas sales). As we hop between the two worlds, I want to share a Farrell family Advent story.

In the fall of 1986, Hunter and I were studying in France. On the first day of class I was confronted by three Libyan students who wanted to know why a President who professed Christianity from a nation that defines itself as a Christian nation bombed Tripoli and Benghazi earlier that year. That question became the start of a friendship. Throughout the semester we shared

teachings from the Koran and the Bible in an effort to learn from one another. In December at the end of the semester, these friends presented us with a gift – a gift to honor our high Holy Day (Christmas). They asked that we open the bag because, although they knew a lot about Jesus, they had yet another question about his birth story. So, we opened the bag and pulled out ...a chocolate Santa Claus.

At first, this is laughable. But it is also a mirror. Is that what someone might see looking at North American Christianity? We know that materialism is a driver in our economy and many of us consciously try not to let materialism take over Christmas. So, this may be easy to shrug off perhaps these non-Americans just couldn't discern the differences between when we

Christians do religious Christmas and when we do fun Christmas, but we know the difference. We can easily flit back and forth between the two without it affecting the real meaning of Christmas. Or can we?

This issue is about the parallel lives we so easily, or not so easily, live from Advent through Epiphany. I hope this issue provides a mirror to look at ourselves so that we can choose how we want to celebrate, how we want to act, and ultimately who we want to be. This issue is a sharing of ideas to create meaningful holidays within our materialistic culture. I am grateful for the authors who have shared some of their traditions, actions and checkpoints throughout the holiday season to help all of us intentionally make the holiday season meaningful and fun without Fifth Avenue scripting the story.

On October 16th, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) was awarded the "Freedom from Want" medal from the Roosevelt Institute in New York City. In conferring the honor, the Roosevelt Institute cited the Fair Food Program as "a sustainable blueprint for worker-driven corporate social responsibility... and freedom from forced labor, sexual harassment, and violence in the workplace for nearly 100,000 workers." Accepting the award for the CIW were Nely Rodriguez and Gerardo Reyes Chaves of the CIW. After the medal was placed upon her shoulders, Nely Rodriguez immediately asked the farmworkers from Immokalee who were present in the audience to stand and recognized the many more who were not able to come. Gerardo Reyes Chavez of the CIW continued, "Somewhere we have heard that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice. . . Today, for first the first time in the history of the south, this dream is coming true for farmworkers in Florida's agriculture. For the first time, we have a place at the table. In our struggle for better wages and working conditions, we are confident that this recognition will help us to arrive to the day in which our dreams will be made fully real."



Noelle Damico

PHP Staff

Ruth Farrell, Coordinator
Ruth.Farrell@pcusa.org

Valéry Nodem, International Hunger
Valery.Nodem@pcusa.org

Alexa Smith, Joining Hands
Alexa.Smith@pcusa.org

Eileen Schuhmann, International Program Asst.
Eileen.Schuhmann@pcusa.org

Andrew Kang Bartlett, National Hunger
Andrew.KangBartlett@pcusa.org

Bryce Wiebe, Enough for Everyone
Bryce.Wiebe@pcusa.org

Noelle Damico, Campaign for Fair Food
Noelle.Damico@pcusa.org

Jessica Maudlin, Managing Editor,
Jessica.Maudlin@pcusa.org

Jennifer Evans, Administrative Assistant
Jennifer.Evans@pcusa.org

Rebecca Barnes, Environmental Ministries
Rebecca.Barnes@pcusa.org

Trey Hammond,
Church Based Community Organizing
Trey.Hammond@aol.com

Fasting as Deep Nourishment—Freedom from Consumption

Rev. Nancy Wiens, Spiritual Director and Wilderness Guide, Emergence Initiatives

I began fasting for spiritual purposes during my college junior-year abroad. Throughout Lent, the Catholic and Anglican student group in Norwich, England fasted one day a week. Both the experience of communal fasting and breaking it with Eucharist inspired my perseverance through classes and studying without physical nourishment. The silent companionship carried me past kitchens and cafes in anticipation of the Table and its unparalleled fellowship. Later, when my British Muslim friends fasted throughout the month of Ramadan, which that year included the summer solstice (in England, about 20 hours of light per day), my compassion and kinship with them flourished.

Half a decade later, I brought the practice to my first ordained, parish ministry. Encircling the Table amid candlelight, we 14-70 year-olds feasted on the freshly-baked bread of heaven and the cup of nourishing life. Each liturgical word sounded different than usual coming off my tongue; each bite and drink seemed like bridges to eternity. Again, having co-fasters brought energy to persist with the discipline past the headaches and brief dizzy spells from moving too quickly.



I discovered shortly that I wanted those Lenten Wednesdays to include a lot more reflective time and contemplative pacing.

Today, the liturgical year is coming to a close, not mounting toward the Resurrection. Fasting's rich association with Lent, as a way to deepen our following of Jesus, can support us as we approach the church's new year and the U.S. culture's highest buying season.

Fasting in Advent invites a particular counter-cultural, contemplative practice: fasting from consumption. Distinct from

mindful eating and participation, often the habit is to consume food and products and to be consumed by mind- and heart-bending schedules; all of which heap stress into our personal and global world. With surprising relief, fasting from consumption can support a mindful engagement of the season at every level. The endless varieties of fasting, both literal and figurative, mean that any of us, who long to reorient toward God, can participate in a fast in nourishing ways. [See the sidebar for some ideas.]

There are many reasons for which someone
continued on page 11

Some of the Many Options for Fasting During Advent:

The list of fasting options is endless. Clearly, some of these, like anxiety, call for setting them down again and again, instead of not putting any food in one's mouth for 24 hours. All of them call for staying connected to what value the fast brings, instead of lapsing into 'should' thinking, which removes freedom and personal choice, and in the process isolates us from God. What fast would support your love of God, your love of self, and your love of neighbor—human and natural? What fast might help you reorient toward God's delight and priorities? Here are some concrete ideas:

- from media, other than 1 hour a day, for a week in Advent
- from sweets except on Friday and Saturday throughout Advent
- from buying any presents before creating a budget for your overall holiday expenses
- from criticism for a day a week in Advent
- from alcohol throughout Advent
- from meat throughout Advent
- from non-organic food throughout Advent
- from food that travels more than 500 miles for three days per week throughout Advent
- from working more than 8 hours a day one day a week throughout Advent
- from doing things because you think you should, instead of doing them while staying in touch with their value to you for one day a week throughout Advent
- from letting anxiety run through you without identifying it and asking God for help, for a day a week in Advent

One Family's Traditions for Advent and Christmas

Barbara Howell, Hunger Action Enabler, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

The heart of Christmas is found in family gatherings, joyful memories and cherished holiday traditions. These Christmas traditions are often the most important thing we can hand down generation after generation. Below HAE Barbara Howell shares some of her family traditions.

My family has many traditions that we follow for Advent and Christmas – some of them are new and some have been in our family for many years.

The first thing to appear at our house is the Advent wreath “dressed up” with a purple ribbon that was made by one of my daughters at an Advent workshop at our church many years ago.

As a child, I had an Advent calendar from Germany given to me by my grandmother. I used it over and over for several years. Then when our children were young, we had a family Advent calendar. My youngest daughter has carried on this tradition with her young children using a fabric Advent calendar that is not as fragile as my 1950s paper and glitter version.

We have a small nativity set that was given to my husband and me in the late 1960s by my parents who bought it in Germany. It has a place of honor beside the ivory camels my father brought home to me from his tour in India during World War II.

As adults

moving into their first apartments, each daughter was given a very small Celtic nativity set as a reminder of when they were little. Now my granddaughter has her own children's nativity set to arrange during Advent.

Over the years I have given a lot of “alternative” Christmas presents. I would give each child a gift from Heifer International. The girls would look forward to guessing which animal they would “receive” that year; sometimes it would be bees, or chicks, or even fish. Now they are given a gift supporting Living Waters for the World. Equal Exchange coffee and chocolate are also favorite gifts to be received by my family and friends.

Invariably, because of my involvement with Christmas activities at church and with family, I am behind in sending cards. So I have adopted a new tradition and send Epiphany cards that (hopefully) arrive on January 6. For the last several years, I have purchased my cards from Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, giving me the opportunity to support our local food bank.

Participating in activities at our church is also a family tradition. Our daughters

were in lots of Christmas pageants and sang in the children's choir on Christmas Eve. Our granddaughter has been a sheep and an angel in the Christmas pageant at her church and our grandson was baby Jesus last year. When the girls come “home” for Christmas, we always attend a Christmas Eve service – the most important tradition for us.

Most of us have some of these same traditions and practices. Traditions of all types are meant to help us remember; remember that we are connected to all the peoples of the world, remember our friends who are distant or those who have passed from this world, remember those most precious to us, and remember what will always be the same and also what is changing. In them, the past, present, and future are given objects that hold them together; those same nativity pieces rearranged. Lighting an advent candle may seem insignificant, and it might be tempting to forget it for a year when life feels too busy. But the candles will illuminate the face of your 5 year-old daughter differently than when she has a 5 year-old daughter of her own. In the midst of that same light, separated by years, those moments meet. May your traditions this Advent, both those long-lived, and the ones you change or start this year, bring you closer to all God's people, all God's creation, and across all God's time. May you remember and may you be remembered.



Barbara Howell

Black Friday: Shedding Light in a Dark Place

Bryce Wiebe, Associate for Enough for Everyone, PHP

It's been called the largest shopping day of the year with flashing lights and stacks of glossy paper demanding your attention promising sales of immense proportions. Retailers, in preparation for the gift-giving season, engage in a "race to the bottom" on the prices of flashy items in the hopes that you and I will spend more money on more stuff without really realizing it, and all the while feeling like we are the beneficiaries in the end, even if those purchases weren't things we actually needed.

It seems like a good deal: Gifts for everyone on your list at rock bottom prices. What's more, the rhetoric of black Friday suggests that it will fuel the entire global economy for the year, pushing retailers and manufacturers from the "red" (debt) to the "black" (profit). Our efforts on black Friday will not only benefit us through our savings, but shopping and spending will be a vote for the common welfare so we are told. We're all in this together. Shop 'til you drop!

And every black Friday people do shop, 89 million last year with more and more stores, and more and more people, creeping their shopping earlier and earlier. Some 35 million people began their shopping on Thanksgiving day, and that number has increased with each passing year. Some families have forgone the meal around the table altogether, opting instead for turkey legs in a tent outside the nearest big box store. Good sense and courtesy are suspended as shoppers engage in their own "race to the bottom" of civility.

There are different paths other than the one with bumper to bumper traffic, leading to loud and aggressive parking lots where mobs of people push and shove their way to the best deal. There are paths that promise a greater connection to the people and places where goods are produced, rather than obscuring the relationship we have with the Earth and

the people all over the world who work for little money in sometimes dangerous conditions to make the things we buy. There are paths that acknowledge our connections, reduce our stress, honor and reward work, and witness to God's economy of abundance and justice.

Paths for more light on black Friday:

1. Avoid it altogether. After a day focused on family, food, and gratitude, spend time with family or friends playing games or working on a group project.
2. Make a gift giving plan with a group of people and add a fun or interesting twist. Drawing names within groups can limit the number of gifts and the expense, and giving gifts that are home-made, locally made, or from second hand sources will generate more fulfilling experiences.
3. Try limiting your shopping to fair-trade only goods. There are many places to choose from and fair trade ensures that a living wage is paid to those who do the work of making the gifts you buy. It also introduces you to the people and stories behind those products. You can look for artisans through the Presbyterian Global Marketplace at www.pcusa.org/globalmarketplace.
4. Try one of the options in the Alternative Giving section. (See the article on p. 8.)

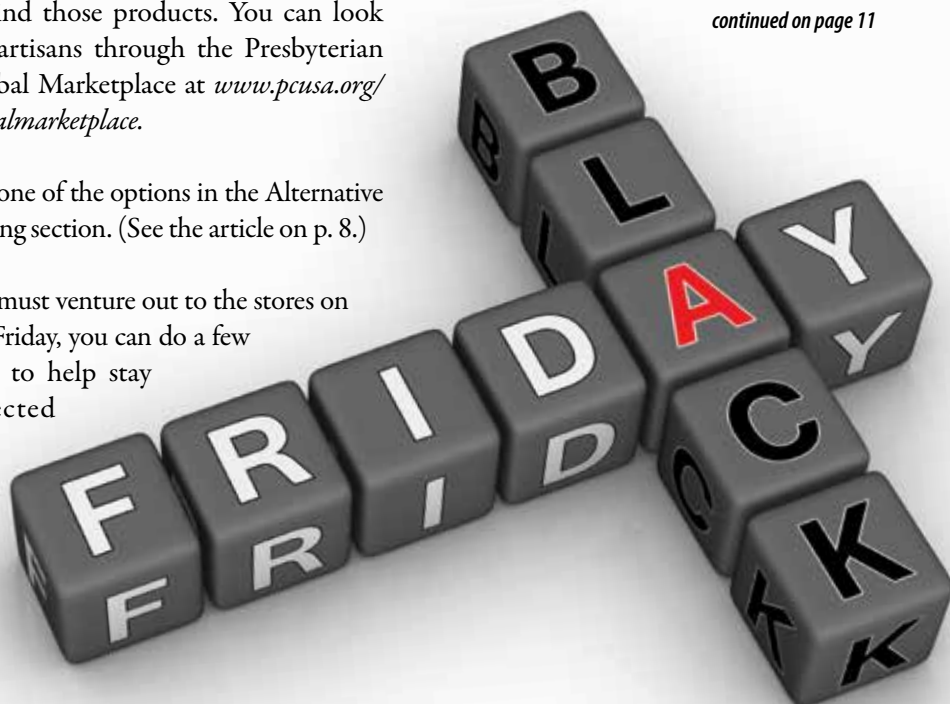
If you must venture out to the stores on black Friday, you can do a few things to help stay connected

to the relationships established through shopping as well as the gratitude engendered by Thanksgiving Day.

1. Say a prayer. In it, restate all the things for which you are grateful. Include your fellow shoppers, the people who must work on this day, and those whose time and hard work went into making the products you buy, often at very low wages.
2. Make it a point to make eye contact and smile to fellow shoppers.
3. Do most of your shopping at a locally-owned and operated business.
4. Say "thank you" to the workers at the stores you visit. Most likely their day is stressful and difficult, and many do not have an option of taking the day off to be with their families. Let them know that you appreciate their work.

Each and every time we buy and sell, we participate in a large and complex web of relationships; to your time and money, to retailers, their employees and suppliers, to

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12 Days of Christmas: Living

Throughout Advent we can be mindful about buying gifts, preparing holiday meals, spending time with family, and attending special church services. What happens with our intentional living once Christmas arrives? Here are some suggestions to help the “12 days of Christmas” continue to be an expression of our faithful, thoughtful living as we welcome the birth of Christ into our churches, and into our world.

Dec 25

As you open gifts, take time to connect on a personal level with the gift giver (through eye contact or making a phone call or writing a note). Also, keep in mind those who are grieving over the holidays and remember them in prayer or deed. If you have experienced a recent loss yourself, take time to grieve and care for yourself.

Prayer: *God of new life, we give you thanks today for the gift of Christ and for all the people in our lives who are the real gifts behind any tangible object.*

Dec 26

As a sign of renewed hope and joy as you revel in Christ’s birth, decide to take on a new, easy practice that makes a difference in the world, such as: taking reusable bags to the grocery store, installing energy efficiency lighting, or taking a bucket bath instead of a shower on occasion.

Prayer: *In this time of abundance and gifts, O God, help us to continue our efforts to give back to the world.*

Dec 27

When leftovers are gone and you’ve decided to go out to eat, be mindful of and kind to restaurant workers. They may be working through the holidays without earning much income. Read about the Food with Dignity procurement campaign at www.pcusa.org/foodwithdignity

Prayer: *We are mindful of those who work in the fields, the processing plants, the restaurants, and grocery stores that help bring food to our tables, even as they themselves may be hurting financially, or even hungry.*

Dec 28

Consider how you might serve someone else during these “days of Christmas.” Can you find a local food kitchen for volunteering? Is there a friend or family member who could use a visit or helping hand? Is there a part of nature you could better tend?

Prayer: *God bless all those around us and help us to act as vessels of your grace.*

Dec 29

The holidays can be a lot of work. Yet, they also are good times to claim some Sabbath. Some people bear more of the burden for cooking, cleaning, hosting, arranging, and organizing. Depending on where you are in the balance, offer to share the work by either letting go of responsibilities and resting, or by taking on some responsibilities so another can rest.

Prayer: *Help us all to trust you and each other, O God, so that all may enjoy work and all may enjoy Sabbath.*

Dec 30

Will you prepare any special treats for a New Year’s celebration? As you plan traditional or fun foods to share, consider buying local foods, using fair trade products, and choosing organic goods. Learn more at www.pcusa.org/fairtrade.

Prayer: *Help us, God of justice, to make good purchasing and food choices so that the earth and all food workers can taste sweetness and experience fullness.*



Intentionally in Christmas-tide

Dec 31

Resolve for the New Year to take on a practice of fasting of some kind. While you may choose to actually fast from food and drink as a spiritually fulfilling discipline, there are also other kinds of fasting. You might fast from long showers, or from bottle water, or from too much technology time. (See article by Nancy Wiens on p. 2)

Prayer: *God of sufficiency and of abundance, help us to engage our desires and wants by being mindful and intentional about how much we consume and what we can share.*

Jan 1

On this New Year's Day, go outside into God's good earth and look around. Look up, look down, breathe in, notice. Give thanks for the amazing gifts of the natural world and pledge to be in good relationship with it this year.

Prayer: *God of all Creation, we give you thanks for the beauty, complexity, and witness of the world around us.*



Jan 2

In the wake of holiday celebrating and enjoying great food and drink, how much do people across the country get to partake in festivities of abundance? Take action to pass policies that address root causes of hunger and poverty in our nation and in our world. One needed action surrounds the SNAP/Food Stamp benefits. Go to www.pcusa.org/snapchallenge to learn more.

Prayer: *God of the poor and hungry, create justice in our society so that the over-indulged take up less resources and the under-served gain some.*

Jan 3

Invite someone you don't know well to join you in an activity you like. Go to a movie or play, or invite them for a meal or to a sporting event you enjoy. At their best, the holidays reconnect us to family and old friends. Start the new year by fostering new, intentional friendships that grow your circle of friends and may introduce you to new experiences.

Prayer: *We thank you, O God, for the chance to reconnect with friends and family. Open our hearts to new relationships as we welcome this new year.*



Jan 4

Plan ahead to Palm Sunday by asking your church to choose Eco-Palms as a way to wave in the Savior of the cosmos. Get ordering information at www.pcusa.org/ecopalms.

Prayer: *In all we do or say or sing in praise of you, O God, may we be mindful of the witness of justice and joy that we can embody.*

Jan 5

Prepare for Epiphany by sharing with others and simplifying your life. Donate used goods to worthwhile local organizations, clearing your house of unnecessary things and re-gifting things you do not need.

Prayer: *Gracious God, help us to let go of old things and trust in your fullness, now and always.*



Alternative Giving

For many people, the holiday time is synonymous with gift giving. Sometimes a tangible gift is appropriate. In that case, we are called to be responsible consumers by making sure that our purchases respect the dignity of the producer by ensuring them a fair wage. The Presbyterian Hunger Program supports Fair Trade as a positive alternative for consumers. Go to pcusa.org/fairtrade to find out how to buy Fair Trade products. Fair Trade is the gift that

gives twice – the tangible gift to a friend or relative, and the gift of respect and a livelihood to a small farmer or artisan.

Sometimes though, it's worth looking at gift giving through a different lens. When you contribute to PHP, your gift becomes something more: a seed, a meal, an education, a fair and dignified wage. Your donation could serve as a gift in honor of a friend or relative this Christmas season.

Once you contribute to the Hunger Fund, print our pre-formatted card (available at pcusa.org/hunger) and give it to let folks know what you've done in their honor for Christmas.

Consider making a donation online at pcusa.org/hunger/give at one of the levels listed below, and note the impact your gift can make.

International Development Assistance

Account H400303

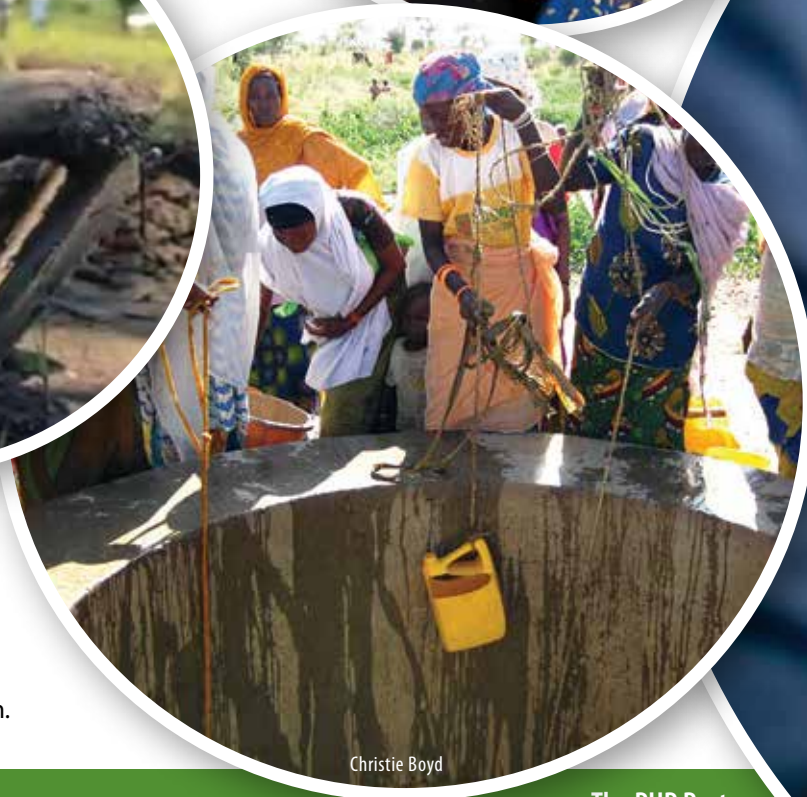
\$25 For less than what it would cost to take a family of four out to dinner, 1 farmer in South Asia can attend a four-day training in rice cultivation, which ensures the knowledge to grow food for their families, and a crop to sell to earn extra income.

\$10 Could be a week's worth of soda, or it could buy a shovel, a hoe, or a machete for a farmer in the Caribbean allowing them to cultivate the food they need to provide for their families.



David Barnhart

\$100 For most of us this amount might buy 50 1-liter bottles of water. In a village in West Africa, it could mean a 1/10 share of a garden well that would last for years. That well in turn translates into much needed drinking water, irrigation sources for crops, and decreased work load, particularly for girls, which then allows more time for education.



Christie Boyd

Hunger & Human Development in the USA

Account E865703



\$50 Might mean movie night with your family or it could become materials for one youth garden in a low income neighborhood. In many urban areas, access to healthy and affordable produce is limited. A garden provides produce, a safe space for learning new skills and creates an invaluable sense of community.

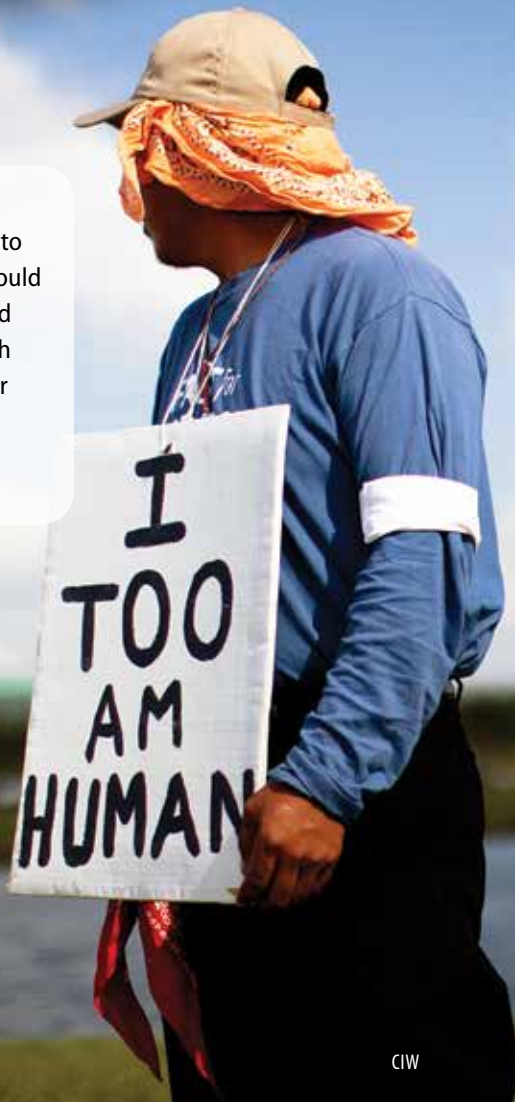
\$15 Could be three mochas at your favorite coffee shop or it could be a week's worth of bus tickets to provide transport for women participating in an economic development training program created to remove barriers that prevent women (and often their children) from accessing adequate food, clothing, and housing.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Other Alternative Giving ideas are available in the 2013 Presbyterian Giving Catalog. The Presbyterian Giving Catalog provides Presbyterians with examples of how their generosity can help make an impact around the world. See the catalog and learn more at presbyteriangifts.org



\$95 Could add another pair to your tennis shoe collection or it could be one week of administrative and operating support for an interfaith organizing group that support fair wages and fights to end modern day slavery.



More Than Just a Face: Morality Demands Justice for Workers

Sr. Simone Campbell, Executive Director, NETWORK, Naeem Baig, President, Islamic Circle of North America & Interfaith Worker Justice Board Member, Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

“All labor has dignity.” That’s what Martin Luther King, Jr. said 50 years ago, and it is still as true today. But too many working men and women are unable to live with dignity in a world where the fastest-growing jobs are the lowest-paying ones. As leaders of faith communities, we believe that just and living wages are a moral imperative and that workers must earn enough to afford the basics for themselves and their families. That’s why we have come together to support those fighting for a living wage. But it turns out the largest low-wage job creator in the country isn’t Walmart or McDonald’s – it’s Uncle Sam.

Through federal contracts, loans and leases, the federal government employs about two million low-wage workers across the country – sewing military uniforms, cleaning the bathrooms at Union Station, serving Big Macs at the Air and Space Museum and hauling federal loads on trucks. These workers can’t even afford rent and food, and often are forced to rely on economic safety net programs like food stamps, Medicaid, and Section 8 housing vouchers to meet their basic needs.

Making matters worse, many of these workers are not compensated for overtime work and are actually paid below minimum wage. It’s illegal, but it happens. As faith leaders, we have visited with many of these workers and have asked the President to meet with them too. Workers like Wilfredo Reyes Lopez. Wilfredo earns \$6.50 an hour – nearly \$2 below the D.C. minimum wage – as a cook in the Reagan Building. Recently widowed, Wilfredo barely makes enough to keep him and his three kids in their single bedroom. Tourists enjoy their visits to iconic federal buildings and contractors reap record profits with massive executive compensation; all the while many of the workers making tourists’



As you are out shopping and eating in restaurants this holiday season be mindful of the fact that the person providing customer service is a fellow human being, with a name and a face.

experiences so memorable are suffering behind the scenes.

Our holy books teach and we preach that work should provide dignity and that all people are entitled to justice. Ecclesiastes asks, “What gain have the workers from their toil?” and in the New Testament, Jesus asks that we see him when we encounter the “least of these who are my family.” The Quran says, “Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things they are due.” While there are differences between us, all religions believe in justice.

Instead of joining us in standing behind these workers, the federal government ignores its responsibility for their plight when it could, and should, set the standard for the just and equitable treatment of working people. We’re asking President Obama to sign an executive order ensuring that workers employed under government contracts or government laws and leases earn a living wage.

President Lyndon B. Johnson issued an executive order in 1965 banning discrimination by the government and government contractors against their workforce, setting a new standard of racial non-discrimination in the workforce. He took a stand for what is just and what is moral. Faith leaders were a big part of the push to end discrimination in the workforce then, and we are standing up now to end “poverty pay.” Today, President Obama can use his authority to ensure that government contracts set the living wage as a benchmark of fair and just employment across the country.

The President has said that “No one who works full-time should live in poverty” and he has promised to do everything in his power to help rebuild the middle class. He has a remarkable opportunity to make good on those statements. With the stroke of a pen, he can lift two million workers out of poverty.

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Fasting, continued from page 3

may choose, or be forced, not to eat food: starvation, hunger strikes, weight loss, torture, spiritual development and freedom, to start. For the increasing number of people who practice Christianity and other faiths in ways that consider the growth, transportation, ingestion, and disposal of food, the growing food and faith conversation can guide our purposes both for eating and abstaining. It interweaves personal health, cultural vitality, socio-economic justice, and ecological regenerativity. It helps us explore relationships between human hunger and climate change and begin to grasp that our consumption practices are matters of life and death to the planet and those living on

it. That 1 of 7 people in the world live daily with persistent hunger—842 million—is particularly shocking given that if global food waste were considered a country, it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases behind the U.S. and China, according to a recent UN report.

Five years ago Annie Leonard created a 20-minute video called “The Story of Stuff.” (www.storyofstuff.org) The result of ten years of research, it visually narrates the process of extracting resources and of producing, selling, and disposing consumer products around the world. It speaks to ecological devastation, social inequities, government

ineffectiveness, and market economics. It calls people to redesign the entire system and take up regenerative practices of reducing consumption, reusing goods, and recycling. Seven compelling videos later, she and her huge collaboration of colleagues of all ages have just produced “The Story of Solutions” to describe the necessity for systemic change and to inspire participation in transforming in ever-increasing ripples. I wonder how those of us in the food and faith community might contribute to Stories of Solutions this Advent by practicing freedom from excess and overabundance. I wonder if you might be hearing a call toward fasting as deep nourishment.

Important notes on the physical elements of fasting:

- Lots of water is a key component to healthy fasting for most people. It helps flush out the natural and synthetic toxins our body ingests with various foods and drinks.
- Of course, overarching health calls for wisdom when medication is a regular part of one’s life. If fasting from all nourishment is not safe for one’s physical health, taking in broth or low-sugar fruit juice or vegetable juice can substitute nicely.
- Extra teeth brushing helps with the bad breath that often comes from the acid in the stomach not having food to digest. (Or maybe you will convince yourself that breath mints are OK for a fast. The sugar or sugar-substitute can accentuate headaches and prevent some of the beautiful effects of fasting, though.)
- Over the hours of the fast, you may notice a slightly altered state of mind. Often the absence of energy from food allows peripheral stimulus to fade away, and a person becomes more attuned to the spiritual intentions behind the fast. Going slow is particularly helpful in this experience.
- Drawing the fast to a purposeful close is a key element to supporting your spiritual intentions and to your body’s beginning to ingest food healthfully. Soups and pureed foods are easy to digest.

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the importers, brokers, manufacturers along the way and, finally, to the workers who make, and the Earth that provides its resources. This black Friday and this Christmas, we can shop and spend in a way that enacts justice in those relationships and deepens our connections with the Earth and the workers, our neighbors and ourselves.

Doing something interesting or fun to avoid the crowds on black Friday? Email your story or reflection to bryce.wiebe@pcusa.org. It could appear on the PHP Facebook page, or the Simple Living blog.

More Than Just a Face, continued from page 10

When we hear stories of workers like Ana Julia Fuentes, who has worked as a janitor at Union Station for 23 years and makes \$8.75, or Ana Salvador, who has worked at McDonald’s at the Air and Space Museum for 11 years and has to rely on food stamps and Medicaid to care for her four kids as a single mother, our faith compels us to address these fundamental moral and human rights issues.

As poverty continues to increase unabated, the faith community must raise its voice and speak in unison. As the leaders of major

national Christian, Islamic and Jewish organizations, we call on the President to bring justice to these workers. Morality demands it.

To learn more about the Good Jobs Nation campaign and other low-wage worker struggles in the retail and food industries, visit www.iwj.org. To learn how to get your congregation involved in supporting low-wage workers, e-mail info@iwj.org.



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