



March 28, 2017
The Lord's Prayer, The Fourth Petition
"Give us this day our daily bread..."

[Read Exodus 16:1-36](#)

Take a look at these "hunger facts" from the ELCA World Hunger web page (<https://www.elca.org/hunger>).

795 million people around the world – that's 1 in 10 – can't access the food they need to live active, healthy lives.

1 billion people live in extreme poverty on less than \$1.25 per day. That's 14.5% of the world's population.

At some point in 2014, more than 48 million people in the United States were unsure where their next meal might come from.

46.7 million Americans were living in poverty in 2014. For a family of four, this means their annual household income was below \$23,850.

Hundreds of millions of people live with food insecurity. They did not have enough food yesterday. They don't know if they will have enough food today. They don't know where they will find food tomorrow. They can't be sure about their "daily bread."

In the face of such facts, we may wonder about the truth of Luther's meaning to the Fourth Petition. "God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people..." That doesn't square with the realities of food insecurity on this planet. It's a puzzle until we reflect on how much food is wasted on this same planet. According to the United Nations Environment Program and the World Resources Institute, one in food calories is wasted every day.

The problem is not food availability. The problem is food distribution. The "haves" have too much, and the "have nots" are starving. God's distribution falls on all people, the just and unjust alike. It is our human sinfulness that channels too much to some and not enough to others.

So, Luther says, "we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving." That grateful recognition certainly means that we should become better stewards of our daily bread and more generous in sharing that daily bread with those who do not have enough.

We can exercise far greater care in our own food usage. We can encourage restaurants, grocery stores and other food vendors to reduce their food wastage. We can support local, national and global efforts to reduce food insecurity and to encourage more equitable access to and distribution of food resources. We can encourage our lawmakers to put laws and structures in place to make enough food available to all. In this way we can be actively grateful for our own daily bread.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit into my heart today to create the gift of faith. Give me the bold faith to make the "big ask" and trust you for the rest. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Do something: Consider a Lenten gift to an organization that fights against hunger. You can gift a gift to Emanuel Lutheran Church with the memo "World Hunger" and 100 percent of your gift will go to feed the hungry.

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