



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

World Food Day

October 16, 2026 | Genesis 1:20-25, Matthew 6:26

Grace to you and peace in the name of Jesus.

Today we are marking World Food Day, a Global Day of Action dedicated to tackling world hunger, eradicating malnutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture for a food-secure future.

The world already produces enough food to nourish everyone, yet a 2025 UN report found that 64.5 million people still face hunger, and 2.69 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet.

You heard me – 2.69 billion!

Sudan is currently the country with the most widespread famine and catastrophic food insecurity. An escalating civil war has left nearly 25 million people facing acute hunger, with official famine conditions confirmed in several regions.

But this is not only a problem in developing countries; nearly 10 million people — about 1 in 4 Canadians, including 2.4 million children — live in food-insecure households. The highest rates of hunger in Canada occur among Indigenous people and Black individuals.

I don't know about you, but these numbers are shocking to me.

In the face of this, we hear the reading from Exodus. When the people were wandering the desert and ran out of food, they complained to God. And God showed mercy, providing them each morning with manna, bread from heaven and quails at night.

In Matthew's gospel, we hear the well-known story of the feeding of the five thousand. A crowd has followed Jesus, and it is getting late.

The disciples want Jesus to disperse the crowds away so that they can find food for themselves. And Jesus responds to them by saying, “you give them something to eat”. The passage goes on with Jesus blessing the five loaves and two fish and there being enough for all to eat with plenty of food left over.

I think there are two things we tend to forget in the telling of this story. First of all, we gloss over the words “you give them something to eat.” Jesus doesn’t let the disciples off the hook. They have noticed the problem—people are hungry— and want to take care of it by turning the solution back to those same hungry people.

Jesus doesn’t care about the size of the problem. Whether it is five thousand people or 10 million, or 2.69 billion, Jesus asks his followers to be involved in the feeding of hungry people.

In other gospel accounts it is a small boy who offers up his lunch of bread and fish, which is then blessed and shared. This small boy is the one who actually does what Jesus asks for — he shares what he has.

I’ve often wondered if the actions of the small boy prompted the five thousand and maybe even the disciples to follow his example and share from what they had. Perhaps someone had a piece of cheese. Or some figs. More bread. Different fish. And with the blessing of Jesus, there was suddenly enough for everyone.

It reminds me of Matthew 25 where Jesus separates the people into those who are righteous and those who are cursed. He tells the righteous, “I was hungry and you gave me food”, and when they are confused by this, Jesus tells them, “As you fed one of my family, you did it to me”.

Jesus wants us to be in the business of feeding people. Providing meals for the homeless. Supporting the food bank through donations or volunteering. Advocating governments to be more generous. And of course, by supporting the work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR).

CLWR helps to feed hungry people around the world in a variety of ways. Through its membership in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank it helps local farmers work with congregations and sometimes ecumenically to grow food.

CLWR also works directly in different countries by training farmers to grow food in changing environmental conditions, working in improving irrigation and soil retention, helping communities with micro-loans and many other ways to help feed hungry people.

Supporting the work of CLWR is another good way that we, like the small boy, can share from what we have and give to those in great need. It's a way we can follow Jesus' command to feed others.

God bless the work of food banks, community meals, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Canadian Lutheran World Relief. God bless our generous heart and hands as we undertake the work of feeding hungry people. Amen.