

Prayers, Pennies, and Persuasion

Recognizing the widespread desperation of persons deprived of food, the Hunger Network in Ohio is a ministry for reducing hunger. Whether close by or around the world, starving and malnourished neighbors call to people of faith for help. More than providing occasional meals or groceries to temporarily relieve hunger, the Program offers a strategy for reducing and preventing hunger through legislative change. It relies on persons willing to offer prayers, gather pennies, and influence public policies.

Prayers

Commitment to relieving hunger begins with prayer, acceptance of ourselves as stewards of whatever we possess and treatment of persons in need as equally deserving recipients. For people of faith, stewardship means understanding that what is ours is meant for all. This recognition may be regularly expressed in Grace before meals. Not only grateful for our own blessings, we welcome those deprived of life's essentials at least symbolically to join us at our table. Whether parents and children, church school classes, or worshipping communities, we thereby broaden the meaning of "grace" and embrace the larger human family as part of our own.

Pennies

Reducing hunger also involves self-giving. By keeping a container for collecting pennies at our dinner table, we are reminded at every meal to share. We recommend the discipline of regularly collecting 2 Cents-A-Meal from each person. With one of every two pennies going to local projects and one to the Hunger Network, families participate in a modest but effective way to make a difference through both immediate service and long-range remedies to reduce hunger.

Persuasion

Along with providing prayers and pennies, interested persons are encouraged to address reasons for poverty and impact public policies that either cause or tolerate hunger. Joining with those who offer their prayers and pennies, the Hunger Network supplies critical information and assistance to act on behalf of the hungry.

2 Cents-A-Meal

A Spiritual Discipline and Shared Ministry for Reducing Hunger



"Just as you cared for one of the least of these who are members of my family, you cared for me" Matthew 25:40

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*A call to Prayer, Pennies and Commitment to Impact Public Policies
by the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church*

2 Cents-a-Meal

What is 2 Cents-a-Meal?

This is a program within congregations designed to remind us of the poor and needy at mealtimes. It encourages individuals and families to engage in a daily devotional exercise of collecting 2 cents per person for shared hunger ministries as they give thanks for their own food. Some people also include their snacks.

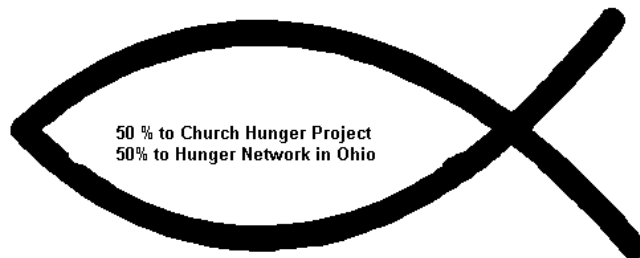
How Does a Household Do 2 Cents-a-Meal?

Each household keeps an offering container for the “2 Cents-a-Meal” offering in the kitchen or on the dining table. One suggested ritual prior to the mealtime blessing, one member of the family may begin with, “Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten.” Then the rest respond, “Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.” Numerous other options are available, adaptable to each family, each person who leads the prayer, and each meal.

What happens to the 2 Cents-a-Meal Offering

Each congregation designates a Sunday of the month to receive the 2 Cents-a-Meal offering from their households. This is usually done at the time of the offertory. One cent is to be given to a local hunger ministry in which the parish is involved and/or supports. The other one-cent is sent to the judicatory to be forwarded to the Hunger Network in Ohio.

OF EACH DOLLAR COLLECTED:



The Need

Most of us rarely spend a day with nothing to eat. Yet hunger is an everyday fact of life for an epidemic number of families. More than 800 million people in the world go hungry. Along with dramatic scenes and statistics of starvation in developing countries, lack of food and malnutrition is a problem even in our neighborhoods.

In the United States, 12 million children live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. That means one in ten households in the U.S. is living with hunger or are at risk of hunger. That number grows weekly.

In Ohio, over one and a half million persons--over 13% of the population--are living in poverty and experiencing “food insecurity.” Over 300,000 Ohioans are chronically hungry, 1/3rd of which are below the age of eighteen with one in six children going to bed hungry or at risk of hunger every night.

Poverty, of course, is largely responsible for hunger and unemployment—and underemployment -- is the leading cause of poverty. The state’s unemployment rate recently hit a 25-year high of 9.4% as job losses continued in both manufacturing and services. This was up 8.8 percent in just a month.

How do we as Christians respond to these, our neighbors-in-need?

The HNO provides a unique ministry of advocacy for the “poorest of poor” in this State, including those regularly deprived of food and malnourished.

What is the Hunger Network in Ohio?

The Hunger Network in Ohio is dedicated to eradicating hunger. Our unique mission to change conditions causing hunger—in Ohio and around the world. Working with other hunger-related human service and advocacy organizations, we equip people to act individually and in concert on hunger and poverty issues. Founded in 1978, Hunger Network in Ohio informs concerned citizens about hunger and helps individuals and groups work on immediate and long-term solutions to hunger. Participants receive publications, have opportunities for education on policy issues, and are given tools to become public advocates for those who are hungry.

We are governed by a board of trustees from the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church and Episcopal Dioceses of Ohio and Southern Ohio, Northeastern and Southern Ohio Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American, Eastminster Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and Central Southeast Association of the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ.

For assistance or more information, please contact
Hunger Network in Ohio www.hungernetohio.org
East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church
[www. Eocumc.com](http://www.Eocumc.com)