Meal Three - Food Stamp Meal

Spotlight on United States
- About half of all American children will receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits at some point before age 20
- Among African-American children, 90 percent will enroll in SNAP before age 20 (Bread for the World)
- 14.6% of U.S. households struggle to put enough food on the table, more than 49 million Americans—including 16.7 million children—live in these households (Bread for the World)
- 14% of people living in the United States live in poverty

Food Stamp Meal
14.6 percent of U.S. household struggle to put enough food on the table. One in eight people is enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Nearly half of those enrolled are children. The average SNAP benefit is $3 per day, or $1 per meal.

For this meal, prepare dinner on the budget of the more than 49 million Americans who live in households struggling to put food on the table. There are recipe ideas below which cost less than $1 per serving.

Printable Table Tent
Print the table tent, designed for the Middle East meal. This table tent includes conversation starters and information about your gifts to ELCA World Hunger in action.

Placemats
Print and use different placemats during your Lenten meals to raise awareness about hunger, poverty and related issues. Available in a separate PDF.

Program
This 30-minute program, specifically designed for the United States meal, contains a reading, litany, monologue, prayers and discussion questions.

Table Prayer
Lord, we greatly rejoice: our souls exult in you. You cause the earth to bring forth food: we eat and are glad. And we beg you to cause righteousness to grow forth from the world that all peoples may live in
strength and safety, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Story: Jim**

Every afternoon for the past 10 years, 88-year-old Jim Freeman hears a knock at the door. A smile comes over his face as he walks to greet a volunteer from Mobile Meals, who is holding a warm, nutritious meal. Sometimes a nurse or a chaplain is there too—just to check on him. [Read the full story](#).

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**Local Recipes**

**Recipes Under $1 Per Person**

**Baked Lentils Casserole, Bean and Rice Burritos, and Broccoli Rice Casserole**

[Download and print these recipes](#).

Taken from *Food for Life: Recipes and Stories on the Right Food*

**Baked Lentils Casserole**

- $0.67 per serving
- Serves 4 people

**Ingredients for Baked Lentils Casserole**

- 1 cup rinsed lentils
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper (optional)
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder (optional)
- 1 can (16 ounces) tomatoes
- 2 thinly sliced carrots
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

**Directions**

Combine lentils, water, seasonings, onion, and tomatoes. Place in 2 quart casserole dish. Cover tightly with lid or foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and add carrots. Stir. Cover and bake 30 minutes longer. Remove cover and sprinkle cheese on top. Bake, uncovered 5 minutes, until cheese melts.

**Bean and Rice Burritos**

- $0.37 per serving
- Serves 8 people

**Ingredients for Bean and Rice Burritos**

- 2 cups cooked rice
ELCA World Hunger

- 1 small chopped onion
- 2 cups cooked kidney beans or one 15 ounce can, drained
- 8 (10 inch) flour tortillas
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1/2 cup grated cheese

Directions
Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Peel the onion, and chop it into small pieces. Drain the liquid from the cooked (or canned) kidney beans. Mix the rice, chopped onion, and beans in a bowl.

Put each tortilla on a flat surface. Put 1/2 cup of the rice and bean mix in the middle of each tortilla. Fold the sides of the tortilla to hold the rice and beans. Put each filled tortilla (burrito) in the baking pan. Bake for 15 minutes. While the burritos are baking, grate 1/2 cup cheese.

Pour the salsa over the baked burritos. Add cheese. Serve the burritos warm.

Broccoli Rice Casserole

- $0.58 per serving

Ingredients for Broccoli Rice Casserole

- 1 1/2 cup rice
- 3 1/2 cups water
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 1 can (10 3/4 ounce) condensed cream of mushroom, or chicken, or celery or cheese soup
- 1 1/2 cups 1% milk
- 2 - 10 ounce packages frozen chopped broccoli or cauliflower or mixed vegetables
- 1/2 pound grated or sliced cheese
- 3 Tablespoons margarine or butter

Directions
Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease on 12x9x2 inch baking pan. In a saucepan mix rice, salt, and 3 cups of water and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat and set aside for additional 15 minutes. Sauté onions in margarine or butter until tender. Mix soup, milk, 1/2 cup of water, onions, and rice. Spoon mixture into baking pan.

Thaw and drain the vegetables and then spread over the rice mixture. Spread the cheese evenly over the top and bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes until cheese is melted and rice is bubbly.
Meet Jim

Every afternoon for the past 10 years, 88-year-old Jim Freeman hears a knock at the door. A smile comes over his face as he walks to greet a volunteer from Mobile Meals, who is holding a warm, nutritious meal. Sometimes a nurse or a chaplain is there too—just to check on him. On his birthday, he receives a birthday card and cake.

Jim’s wife recently passed away after a 22-year battle with Parkinson’s disease. His two adult children have moved away. So it is just Jim and his dog, Brook, who occupy his home in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Jim, like many of the 600 people served by Mobile Meals each day, lives below the poverty level. “I have no income other than my social security,” he says. “When I crunch the numbers, I realize that without this [help] I would not eat the way I do.”

As Jim ages, volunteers pay careful attention to his dietary needs—adding vitamins, limiting salts, increasing fluids—whatever it takes to keep Jim healthy and free from hunger. “We are feeding God’s people,” says Ralph Gillespie, a Lutheran volunteer. “And that’s what ELCA World Hunger is all about.”

Watch and download the video of Jim.
Your Gifts to ELCA World Hunger in Action

Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support work around the United States, including hundreds of soup kitchens, food pantries and homeless shelters. Many of these ministries are organized by Lutheran congregations. A few examples of ELCA World Hunger grant recipients include:

- **Zion Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisc.**, in their efforts to provide personal, household and hygiene products for families living in poverty.
- **Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Tuscon, Ariz.**, as they serve monthly meals to those who are homeless.
- **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Denver, Colo.**, in their work to provide English as a Second Language classes, child care and transportation services to those in need.

- **What did it take** for your meal to get from a field to your plate? (Think seeds, soil, sun and water.)
- **What are some of the benefits** of eating locally?
- **What are some of the challenges** of eating locally?
- **Think about the last meal you ate at home. How many states or countries** contributed to that meal?
- **How is this meal different from what you might otherwise be having for dinner tonight?**
- **Is your congregation involved with community gardens or soup kitchens?**
- **How difficult would it be for you to grow some of your own food?** What produce would you grow? What would you do with all the food you couldn’t use?

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Support ELCA World Hunger by visiting www.elca.org/hunger/donate, calling 800-638-3522, or mailing a check to ELCA World Hunger, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694-1764.
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• Low-income households spend a greater share of their income on food (Bread for the World). More that 90 percent of SNAP benefits are used up by the third week of the month (Bread for the World). How much of your budget goes to buying food in a typical week?
• Consider some of the hard choices those living in poverty must make about how to budget (housing, utilities, transportation, food, health care, child care, education). What would you leave out?
• What are some of the challenges of preparing a meal on a low budget?
• What are some of the challenges of preparing a healthy meal on a low budget?
• How is this meal different from what you might otherwise be having for dinner tonight?
• SNAP participation has increased 44.3 percent above pre-recession levels (Bread for the World). What do you know about hunger in your community? In your neighborhood? How can you help? How can the church help?

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Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support Mobile Meals as well as hundreds of other programs like it in the United States and in more than 60 countries around the world. Will you help with your gift today?

YES! I would like to support ELCA World Hunger.

☐ I have included my gift of $250.
☐ I have included my gift of $100.
☐ Other $____________

Please make your check payable to “ELCA World Hunger.” Place your gift in your congregation’s offering plate or mail it to: ELCA World Hunger, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694-1764. To give online with a credit card, please visit www.elca.org/hungerdonate.
ORDER OF SERVICE

PRAYER:
“Listen,” you say. And we quiet ourselves to hear you, Lord. Amen.

READING:
READING: Revelation 3:20 (NRSV)
“Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking:/ if you hear my voice and open the door,/ I will come in to
you and eat with you, and you with me.” (Selah*)

(*Note: Read, pausing at the slash marks. Allow for a “selah,” or silent moment, before moving into the
lesson.)

MONOLOGUE: Mobile Meal Volunteer Ralph
I guess the title, Mobile Meal Volunteer, says it all. Hey, I volunteer. I put some wheels on some meals
and deliver food to people like my friend, Jim Freeman. Jim’s 88 years old and recently lost his wife to
Parkinson’s disease. His children live out of state. Jim and his dog, Brook, both look forward not only to
the meal but for the contact as well. We keep an eye out for people like Jim who live alone and don’t have
much social contact. The meal is only half of it.

Jim lives on his Social Security. This meal helps him eat well and manage his money.
When I knock on the door, I like to think it’s not me knocking but Jesus. You know. “Behold I stand at the
door and knock” kind of thing. I give Jim a warm meal, and he gives me back a smile and a kind word. I
guess in that way we feed each other.

You know it’s programs like ELCA World Hunger that help fund the Mobile Meal Volunteers. Next time
you write a check out to ELCA World Hunger, knock three times on your desk and think of Jim. When he
opens the door, he’ll be smiling at you. It’s your financial support in that meal box as well as the mashed
potatoes and chicken.

Why do we do this? We are feeding God’s people. That’s what ELCA World Hunger is all about.”

continued on back...
LITANY:
Leader: Jesus is standing and knocking the verse says. It’s happening right now.
Congregation: This is happening right now?
Leader: Yes, right now.
Congregation: Are you sure? I don’t really hear anything. It’s pretty quiet.
Leader: Listen again. It’s more like tapping.
Congregation: He’s not pounding down the door. I don’t hear any pounding. He’s not pushing his way in.
Leader: He never does. It’s just a light rap really.
Congregation: I’m not sure. Maybe there’s something. It could just be my heart beat.
Leader: That would be enough. Don’t you think someone should answer it?

PRAYER:
Come into my heart, Lord Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Were you surprised that ELCA World Hunger works domestically as well as internationally? What other domestic programs are sponsored by ELCA World Hunger? Make it a point to find out.

2. Ralph, our volunteer said, “We are feeding God’s people. That’s what ELCA World Hunger is all about.” When we feed God’s people, what else can happen? It’s not just about food. Not sure? Go back and ask Ralph and Jim in today’s lesson!

3. What is your congregation already doing that might be replicated by other congregations? Check out “The Table,” an online web community sponsored by ELCA World Hunger, and share your ideas while meeting others involved with ELCA hunger efforts.