“The Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples....”

—Isaiah 25:6
A PLACE AT THE TABLE
Bread for the World’s 2013 Offering of Letters


1. Petition President Obama to set a goal and work with Congress on a plan to end hunger in the United States and abroad.
2. Write letters to your representative and senators in Congress asking them to protect programs vital to hungry and poor people and work with the president on a plan to end hunger.

Your congregation will find the petition to the president and a prepaid envelope inside this folder pocket. For a sample letter to your members of Congress, turn to page 13. Both the petition to the president and a sample letter to Congress can also be found online at www.bread.org/go/OL.

Stay Involved with Bread for the World Throughout 2013

March 1, 2013—Launch of Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters, “A Place at the Table.”

March 1, 2013—Release of feature-length documentary on hunger, A Place at the Table.

June 8-10, 2013—Bread for the World National Gathering

June 10, 2013—International Meeting on Maternal and Child Nutrition

June 11, 2013—Bread for the World Lobby Day

October 20, 2013—Bread for the World Sunday

November 2013—Launch of the 2014 Hunger Report

Find more resources for your Offering of Letters at www.bread.org/go/OL.
You Can Help End Hunger
Join Bread for the World’s 2013 Offering of Letters

Millions of people in the United States and around the world face hunger every day. For those people more is at stake now than during any previous Bread for the World Offering of Letters campaign. This year we aim to prevent deep cuts in funding for programs that save lives and help people around the world overcome poverty. We also seek a bold but achievable goal—a united plan to end hunger.

Congress and the president have many issues to resolve this year, starting with our nation’s fiscal and budgetary crisis. It would be easy to say that now is not the time to claim a vision of a world without hunger. But this is precisely the time—when hungry and poor people are most vulnerable.

During budget and spending debates, we must convince Congress to protect programs vital to hungry and poor people here and around the world. We must also persuade Congress and the president to make ending hunger a national priority and work together on a plan.

Neither task will be simple, especially if we remain rooted in today’s deep political divide. But God is at work in our midst, preparing an abundant table where all are welcome. With your voice, and those of others in your church, campus, or group, we will convince our nation’s leaders to ensure a place at the table for everyone.

Petitioning the President

This year, for the first time, we’re asking faithful advocates to sign a petition to the president in addition to writing letters to Congress. This is a new strategy, to show the president the depth of our support for ending hunger. We need his leadership and are convinced that our collective voice can motivate him and help create the political will to enact a national plan to end hunger.

For more information on the White House Campaign, see page 8.

Writing Congress

As in past Offering of Letters campaigns, we are urging you and your church to write letters to Congress about legislation that helps hungry and poor people. We provide you with a sample letter and other information to help you encourage people to prepare letters to their representatives and senators. Our letters will push for legislation to protect key programs and urge that Congress work with the president to end hunger.

For more information on the Congressional Campaign, see page 10.

Documenting Hunger

As the 2013 Offering of Letters, “A Place at the Table,” launches on March 1, a major documentary of the same name will begin screening in theaters, on iTunes, and on-demand, nationwide. A Place at the Table emphasizes the hunger, stress, and complications in the lives of Americans for whom putting food on the table is a daily struggle. Bread for the World is a major alliance organization of the film—which is produced by Participant Media, the company behind An Inconvenient Truth and Food, Inc. Magnolia Pictures is the film’s distributor.

By coordinating advocacy and action around the film, Bread for the World will promote a national dialogue about how to best secure the leadership, commitment, and unity to effectively end hunger. Excerpts from the film, along with other useful video resources, are on the DVD inserted in this kit.

For more information about the role of the film in this year’s Offering of Letters, turn to page 20.
Throughout scripture, we see God’s intentions for human wholeness, manifested in Isaiah’s description of abundance: “The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast—... God’s kingdom is envisioned with ample food and drink and a place for all people at the table. Stories that demonstrate God’s abundance and provision fill the Bible. When the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, God provided manna for them to eat and “those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed” (Exodus 16:18).

This call for human wholeness is embodied in Jesus, who came into the world as a restorer of both spiritual and earthly needs and addressed suffering in many forms. His compassion led him to heal an epileptic boy, to cast out demons, to restore sight to the blind.

And Jesus fed the hungry, time and again. Stories of Jesus feeding the multitudes appear in each of the four gospels. Matthew describes Jesus’ compassion for his hungry followers and the plentitude at his hands:

He took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. All of them ate and were filled, and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. (Matthew 15:36-37)

Early in his ministry when Jesus told the disciples to lower their nets in a place where they had given up fishing, “they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break” (Luke 5:7). Later, after his resurrection, Jesus revealed himself to his disciples in the same way, by filling their nets to over-flowing and eating with them (John 21:1-7).

In another manifestation after his resurrection, Jesus shared fellowship at the table with two of his disciples after walking along the road to Emmaus. It was while eating and drinking with Jesus after the journey that his followers recognized him. Luke writes that the two then proclaimed his visit, saying that “he was known in the breaking of the bread” (Luke 24:33).

The Acts of the Apostles describes how the early church created communion and cared for those in greatest need:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need...they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Even in our rapidly changing world, God’s intention for human wholeness remains. Abundance and provision are in our midst. Yet, while there is enough food in the world for everyone to eat, many of God’s people do not have access to the food they need.

So, as followers of Jesus, we can respond to his concern for “the least of these” and ensure that all people have a place at the tables of the world. In addition to feeding our hungry neighbors ourselves, Christians must urge their elected leaders to ensure that people will “hunger no more, and thirst no more” (Revelation 7:16).

While there is more than enough food in the world to feed all people, millions go hungry. Now is the time to gather the political will to follow Jesus’ teaching and ensure a place at the table for the least of these.

“On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.”

— Isaiah 25:6
A Hunger for Advocacy
Jeanette Salguero: Meeting life with love

Jeanette Salguero is the co-pastor of the Lamb’s Church on New York’s Lower East Side, where she is co-pastor with her husband, Gabriel.

Jeanette Salguero sings during a Bread for the World Sunday service at the Lamb’s Church on New York’s Lower East Side, where she is co-pastor with her husband, Gabriel.

Jeanette Salguero: “The food staple was white rice and fried eggs,” Jeanette recalls about her meals growing up.

As a small child, Jeanette benefited from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which the federal government provides to needy families so that mothers and children have adequate nutrition from pregnancy through age 5. “So I was a WIC baby, and I remember receiving the big cheese blocks,” says Jeanette.

Ah! My father only reached the third grade, he encouraged me and pushed me and told me I had to study,” she says. “I grew up in that environment understanding that eventually I was going to do something to help others.”

The motto of the Lamb’s Church is “where life is met with love,” and so Jeanette and Gabriel seek out lives in need of their love. They participate in the Emergency Food Program, which links food banks across the state of New York. And they provide food, communion, and an art program to people living in an HIV/AIDS facility immediately next to the church.

But, while attending to the food emergencies around her, Jeanette realizes that she and her church cannot possibly feed everyone in need. Advocacy is a crucial part of her ministry. As a member of Bread for the World, Jeanette finds herself writing letters, making calls, and visiting Capitol Hill to talk to policy makers about hunger and poverty.

“The way that I can explain it best is if someone is being thrown from a mountain, the church is very good at asking that individual, ‘What is it that you need? Can I help you? Can I heal your wounds? However the church also needs to ask who is launching them from the mountain.”

As she contemplates the 2013 Offering of Letters, with its added emphasis on the president and Congress working together to end hunger, Jeanette says “Budgets are moral documents, and the president of the United States needs to get consensus around this issue and focus on the hungry, the stranger, the widow, and other individuals who are marginalized.”

“When I thank God for Bread for the World for having this sort of forum where people of faith can actively engage on issues of policy in a real way without feeling that they are somehow out side the norm or they are doing something that is unchristian or unreligious,” says Derick. “The reality is that in order to break free from the bondage [of poverty] in this country and the world, we need elected officials to make good on their words and put love thy neighbor at the center of our legislative agenda.”

When Derick Dailey’s grandmother passed away in August 2012, he was asked by his family members to send a message to her as she departed.

“I said her favorite verse in her ear. I whispered, ‘The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof…”’

Derick recalls his grandmother repeating that verse frequently while he was growing up in her home in North Little Rock, Ark., with his twin, Eric. “Whether I was sitting on the piano playing and she was singing the hymns—or she would just sometimes just break out in that verse because she believed deeply in that,” says Derick.

“That everything on this earth belonged to God.”

“Hunger and poverty are not just some abstract social science terms. These are realities for people, and not just realities for people in Third World countries but realities for people in my state, a state that I love—whether it’s in Phillips County or in Little Rock seeing my own family struggle to make ends meet.”

Those experiences motivated Derick to get directly involved in ending hunger and poverty. He joined Bread for the World and was one of Bread’s first Hunger Justice Leaders. Following that training in advocacy, Derick founded the Westminster Poverty Initiative, which runs a food bank and facilitates donations of clothing and household items to people in need in the community surrounding the college. Derick and Eyob also raised funds and opened a library in Ethiopia.

But Derick knows that larger actions are necessary.

“They is part of the Women’s Missionary Society of our local church,” says Derick, “so she would start early Saturday morning cooking, … and oftentimes we would get confused thinking the meal was for us and she would remind us, ‘no, I will cook something for you all on Sunday evening; this meal is for the sick and shunt in.”

“Jeanette finds herself graduate student at Yale Divinity School, has seen hunger and poverty firsthand. “Arkansas is this rural community,” he explains, “and it struggles deeply with food insecurity, with hunger, with poverty, poor education, crime, and poor infrastructure. You name it and Arkansas is confronting it.”

As a sophomore at Westminster College in Missouri, Derick and his friend Eyob researched poverty in Phillips County in southeast Arkansas, one of the poorest counties in the nation. The two met with mayors and church leaders to talk about the conditions and causes of economic devastation along the Mississippi River. Derick recalls that at one point, Eyob, who is Ethiopian, exclaimed, “Wow, this looks like rural Ethiopia.”

“It never occurred to me that a place in this country, the wealthiest country in the world would look like something in rural Ethiopia,” says Derick. “It was a big wake-up call for me that the core of poverty is lack of opportunity and lack of resources.”

“Listening to the stories and hearing the challenges [of local leaders] made clear to me that hunger and poverty are not just some abstract social science terms. These are realities for people, and not just realities for people in Third World countries but realities for people in my state.”

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**Petition the President**

“My faith teaches me that poverty is a moral issue,” said President Barack Obama during his campaign for re-election. In a video statement to the Circle of Protection, a group of 65 national Christian leaders, the president made a commitment to poor and hungry people.

“When I hear the story of a single mom struggling to put food on the table or a child born into poverty or a dad who’s gone months without a paycheck, I cannot sit idly by—not as a person and certainly not as a president,” said Obama in his statement. (Gov. Mitt Romney also submitted a video statement to the Circle of Protection.)

Those words hearten members of Bread for the World as we prepare for our boldest effort to date: We believe that the president of the United States can and should use his White House pulpit to rally the nation around ending hunger and poverty. Thus, for the first time, our central advocacy tool, the Offering of Letters, will petition the president—in addition to sending letters to members of Congress.

We are asking President Obama to set a goal and work with Congress on a solid plan to end hunger. We aim to send at least 100,000 signatures to President Obama urging him to make this happen.

As emphasized in Bread for the World Institute’s 2013 Hunger Report, worldwide hunger and poverty have decreased by nearly half since 1990, due in large measure to efforts by the community of nations to meet the Millennium Development Goals. This illustrates the importance of leadership, goals, and plans—complete with timetables and benchmarks.

For more information about our White House Campaign, turn to page ii.

**Write Letters to Congress**

Your letters are needed this year more than ever. We must urge our congressional leaders to save a prominent place for hungry people at the table of our national priorities. If we ignore the deficit-reduction debates, we could easily lose the gains we have made over the years.

Now we are asking Congress to work with the president on a comprehensive plan to end hunger.

As we advocate to end hunger within a generation, we remain mindful that the immediate needs of hungry people must be met. Thus, we are asking Congress to ensure a place at the table for hungry and poor people by protecting programs vital to them. Our letters will ask members of Congress to focus on three issues:

1. Protecting anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs like the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and poverty-focused development assistance (PDFA).
2. Making permanent the current tax credits for poor families: the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC).
3. Raising adequate revenue to end hunger.

Our goal is to send at least 250,000 letters to Congress on these issues.

For more information about our Congressional Campaign, turn to page 10.

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**SECTION 1**

**A Place at the Table**

Overview of Bread for the World’s 2013 Offering of Letters

As a Congressman, I truly enjoy hearing from constituents. It is valuable to hear their ideas, goals, concerns, and suggestions. Letter writing is beneficial to constituents and members of Congress alike.

– Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.)

The table is a powerful symbol of community. Whether eating meals, playing a game, or discussing the household budget, families regularly gather at the table. Communion around a table exists outside of the family as well. Often, when people find fellowship, unity, or accord, it is around a dinner table, a coffee table, a negotiating table.

Jesus met with his disciples around tables to share his teachings and fellowship. He gathered his closest disciples to the table for a last supper to gather strength and provide guidance before his faithful journey to Calvary. The communion of that event is repeated in churches throughout the world each week, inviting all to join Jesus at a shared table.

Bread for the World began around a table in the parish hall of a church on New York’s Lower East Side nearly 40 years ago. That small gathering took to heart Jesus’ message of abundance and sharing, exemplified in the story of the loaves and fishes. The mission of Art Simon, founder of Bread for the World, and like-minded Christians was bold: We can end hunger.

In that spirit, this year’s Offering of Letters asks our national leaders in both the executive and legislative branches to take a hard look around the figurative table and ensure a place for everyone—not just those blessed with wealth, power, and influence.

Isaiah reminds us that God’s table is abundant for all people, “a feast of rich food, a feast of well matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow...”

That vision of God’s bounty informs the advocacy work of Bread for the World. We know that there is more than enough food for everyone in the world. Yet 1 in 6 Americans does not always have enough to eat. Nearly 900 million people around the world struggle with hunger on a daily basis.

Bread for the World asks why so many people go hungry when others have more than enough. Local churches and community pantries deliver food to the tables of our most vulnerable neighbors. But those efforts combined are only the equivalent of 4 percent of federal expenditures on anti-hunger programs here in the United States. The federal government provides 25 times the amount of food assistance as does charity.

Petition President Obama to set a goal and work with Congress on a plan to end hunger in the United States and abroad.

**THE ACRONYMS**

- SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps)
- WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
- PDFA: Poverty-focused development assistance
- EITC: Earned Income Tax Credit
- CTC: Child Tax Credit

**Write Letters to your representative and senators in Congress**

- Protect anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs like SNAP, WIC, and PDFA.
- Make permanent the current tax credits for poor families (EITC and CTC).
- Raise adequate revenue to end hunger.

**Petition the President**

As I interact with my constituents, they also educate me or alert me on the issues important to them. This is why regular contacts—their letters, visits, or phone calls—are very important between legislators and our constituents. I cannot legislate for them and neither can I educate them on the larger implications of their concerns without this regular interaction.

– Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas)
Persistent hunger is morally unacceptable. We have enough food to feed everyone, but lack the effective leadership and political will to make ending hunger a top priority. Extraordinary progress against global poverty has been made in the last two decades, but continued progress against hunger in the United States and around the world will be impossible without a presidential commitment and congressional leadership.

More than 50 million Americans, or 16.4 percent of the population, lived at risk of hunger in 2011. Fifteen percent of American households lived in poverty and 1.46 million of those households lived on incomes of less than $2 per person, per day.

Globally, despite declining levels of extreme poverty and marked progress in child survival, nearly 900 million people continue to suffer from chronic hunger and 1.5 billion people live on less than $1.25 a day—the definition of extreme poverty.

Effective safety-net programs in the United States and vital humanitarian assistance abroad have helped millions of people facing the stark reality of hunger. Last year, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) helped 44.7 million Americans put food on the table and lifted 3.9 million people out of poverty. International food aid programs reached more than 66 million of the world’s most vulnerable people, including 5.2 million children. While these programs fill an incredible need, food assistance alone cannot bring an end to persistent and extreme hunger and poverty.

Ending Hunger Abroad

As highlighted in Bread for the World Institute’s 2013 Hunger Report, international goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), have built public support and galvanized political leadership towards ending hunger and extreme poverty. Extreme poverty is falling in every region. The goal to halve the proportion of people who live in hunger and poverty was met in advance of the 2015 deadline. The goal could not have been met without a concerted global effort and leadership from all countries, including the United States, which launched the three-year, $3.5 billion Feed the Future initiative to invest in country-driven agriculture and food security programs.

However, as the MDG deadline approaches, some goals will not be met and further progress will require continued commitment by all countries. Discussions have already begun about what will be needed after 2015. The United States must continue to demonstrate leadership by actively participating in shaping the next global development framework so that it is inclusive and transparent and includes a goal to end hunger and poverty in every country in the world within a generation.

Ending Hunger in the United States

Global development goals need not only apply to developing countries. A truly global goal to end hunger and poverty requires efforts to do so in the United States as well. The recession has led to the highest spikes in U.S. poverty since the 1960s. The United States has one of the highest hunger and poverty rates in the developed world. Our effective safety-net programs have kept the number of hungry people from increasing since 2008. Still, the number of people struggling to feed themselves and their families is far too high in the richest nation in the world.

History proves that national goals can lead to great reductions in poverty and hunger. As highlighted in the 2013 Hunger Report, our country set national goals to end poverty in the early 20th century and again in the 1960s. These goals succeeded in reducing poverty and hunger by providing free secondary school education for every child in America and establishing the vital nutrition safety net in place today. We have done it before; we can do it again.

Progress against hunger and poverty in the United States will require strong leaders who are willing to set a goal to end hunger. Any plan to end hunger must strengthen the safety net and include investments in human development through education and skills training that will fill jobs the country needs to boost economic growth. To learn more about past success at reducing poverty in the United States, read “Progress on Hunger and Poverty” on page 22.

Tell the President That Now Is the Time to Act

A plan to end hunger will not be achieved overnight. Hunger must become a part of the national dialogue for the goal to be embraced by key stakeholders from the local to the global level. The documentary film, A Place at the Table, and the 2013 Hunger Report, Within Reach: Global Development Goals, are resources that we can use to bring attention to the reality of hunger and the need for solutions.

The president must lead by setting time-bound goals and bringing together those affected by hunger and poverty, experts, and policy makers to develop a comprehensive plan to end hunger. The president must then work with Congress and international leaders to enact the plan and put our country on track to achieve an end to hunger.
While members of Bread for the World envision a country in which all people have the opportunity to live to their potential, we know that it is only possible with a federal commitment to programs that reduce hunger and help people move out of poverty.

For the past two years, Congress has been struggling with budget decisions of enormous and long-term consequences. Thanks to your advocacy, Congress has reduced the federal deficit by over $2 trillion without significant cuts to vital programs.

During this time, Bread for the World members have freed off some of the most extreme proposals to gut programs for hungry and poor people. But as Congress engages in the final phases of deficit reduction, the stakes continue to rise. Having passed the American Taxpayer Relief Act on Jan. 2, 2013—a deal to prevent the nation from going over the fiscal cliff—Congress now faces the task of forming a comprehensive approach for reducing the country's long-term deficits.

Proposals to slash funding for crucial programs may become more severe as the year continues. Of course, a strong economy is key to reducing hunger and poverty. So are effective federal initiatives like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), international poverty-focused development assistance (PFDA), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and tax credits for low-income working families.

*PROTECT FUNDING FOR SNAP*

Evidence continues to show that our nation’s domestic and international anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs are effectively combating hunger in the recession, the worst this country has seen since the Great Depression. In fact, the number of hungry people in the United States has held relatively steady due to programs like SNAP.

SNAP is a cyclical program that expands and contracts according to need. It supplements the food budgets of the neediest people through an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which works like a debit card and can be used at grocery stores or other authorized locations. Despite SNAP’s effectiveness, Congress has proposed deep cuts that would reduce benefits and cut struggling families from the program.

This year, Congress must renew the farm bill, which governs federal farm and food policy—including SNAP. Congress can continue, alter, or discontinue federal farm and nutrition programs. SNAP will likely be targeted for cuts in this process.

*PROTECT FUNDING FOR PFDA*

Representing less than 1 percent of the federal budget, poverty-focused development assistance supports life-saving programs that meet basic human needs. PFDA is not only a demonstration of U.S. moral leadership, it is also a cost-effective way to increase our national security.

PFDA supports health and nutrition programs to ensure children survive and have access to food—especially during the critical 1,000 days between pregnancy and age 2—enabling them to realize their potential.

Nine million children have been reached through Feed the Future nutrition programs since 2009. The programs have also helped 1.8 million food producers adopt improved technologies and management practices for better crop yields. PFDA has gotten bipartisan support from the current and previous presidents as well as from Congress, but future funding is at risk as Congress strives to reduce deficits.

*Support a National Commitment to Reduce Hunger Through the Tax Code*

Preserve the EITC and CTC. Within the tax code, the two provisions that have the most direct benefit to poor and hungry people are the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). Both are refundable tax credits that supplement the wages of low-income workers. People apply for these tax credits when they complete their income tax returns.

This means that working families who are too poor to have a tax liability still get a refund check. The more wages people earn, the more benefits their families receive — up to a certain point. The EITC and CTC lift more people out of poverty than does any other federal program (other than Social Security). In 2011, these credits helped 8.7 million low-income working families avoid severe poverty.

The American Taxpayer Relief Act extended important improvements to the EITC and CTC, but these will expire in five years. The EITC and CTC are especially vulnerable to cuts right now as Congress simplifies the tax code and curbs deductions. But the low-wage workers who benefit from the EITC and CTC do not have lobbyists. Bread for the World members must raise their voices to protect these credits.

*Raise Revenue to Support Anti-Hunger Programs*

While the American Taxpayer Relief Act was a good start, we still need comprehensive deficit reduction that makes smart spending cuts, boosts the economy, and raises sufficient revenue to maintain programs that lift people out of poverty.

*Work with the President*

In this year’s Offering of Letters, we are also asking Congress to work with the president on a plan to end hunger. No national initiative will succeed without leadership and cooperation from both the legislative and executive branches. To achieve the goal to end hunger within a generation, both Congress and the president must meet at the planning table. This is a bipartisan issue that requires all of us to work together.
In this digital age, it may seem anachronistic to write personal letters to members of Congress when it’s so easy to click on and send a form email message. But because it’s so easy, Congress is flooded with electronic messages. Research indicates that the volume of form emails has decreased their effectiveness. But writing a personal letter or personal email message tells your member of Congress that you are so concerned about the issue that you’ve taken time to write him or her about it. Congressional staffers log each letter; the number of letters indicates how serious the issue is to the constituents.

Writing a letter is simple and should take only a few minutes. Follow these steps for an effective letter:

1. Write your name and address at the end of your letter and on the envelope, so your members of Congress know you are one of the people they represent.

2. Ask for specific action, using this sentence or your own words:
   
   I urge you to ensure a place at the table for hungry and poor people by protecting programs vital to them.

3. Give reasons why. Some examples:
   
   • Share your personal story about what motivated you to write. Letters with personal stories are the most compelling and effective.
   
   • My church is already helping by [example], but I also expect you to enact a plan to end hunger at home and abroad.

4. Send your letter to Congress.

   Put each letter in a separate envelope and address it.

   Send your letter to:

   Sen.
   U.S. Senate
   Washington, DC 20510

   Rep.
   U.S. House of Representatives
   Washington, DC 20515

### GENERAL SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Senator/Representative,

I urge you to ensure a place at the table for hungry and poor people by protecting programs vital to them. You should work with your colleagues and the president to set a goal and establish a plan to end hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world.

A world without hunger is possible, but you must make ending hunger a priority for that to happen. This means Congress needs to take a balanced approach to deficit reduction and sufficiently fund programs that effectively reduce hunger and poverty.

Therefore, I ask you to ensure that all of our brothers and sisters have a place at the table, so that we may soon see the day when no child goes hungry and no parent sacrifices a meal so that his or her child can eat.

Sincerely,

[your name]
[your address]
[city, state, ZIP]

*Issue-specific sample letters are available at www.bread.org/go/OL.*
As you plan your Offering of Letters, know that you are helping millions of hungry and poor people worldwide by advocating for long-term change in our national policy. This year’s Offering of Letters includes a petition to the president as well as letters to members of Congress. See “Combining Petition and Letters” on page 32 for ideas on how to handle the combined focus.

Here are ten easy steps for conducting a successful Offering of Letters:

1. Gather Resources
Order educational publications from Bread for the World and secure the right equipment to show the Offering of Letters DVD or stream videos from the Offering of Letters website: www.bread.org/go/OL.

2. Organize an Offering of Letters Team
Ask people in your congregation, on your campus, or in other groups to participate on your team. When you talk to concerned people, be prepared to distribute copies of the “Act Now!” flier in the back pocket of this kit or other printed materials that explain the focus of the offering.

3. Develop a Plan
Decide on a date, time, and location for your Offering of Letters. Give yourself adequate time to publicize the event, with a timeline of tasks to complete before the target date. Remember to confirm speakers and make hunger-related materials available to people who can help raise awareness. Check the website or call your organizer for the latest sample letter.

4. Advertise the Event
Ask the leaders of your church, campus group, or other organization to include hunger issues as a sermon topic or presentation near the date target. Display posters around your church, facility, or campus. Write articles for your campus newspaper or church newsletter. Include an announcement about the Offering of Letters in the weekly bulletin, email newsletter, or other publication. See “Spread the Word” on page 17.

5. Prepare the Venue
Letter writing can occur wherever people gather. Prepare the room or sanctuary. If using tables, make sure there are sufficient chairs to accommodate writers. See that each table is supplied with a petition, sample letters, pens, stationery, envelopes, and the names of appropriate members of Congress. At a meal line, or similar venue where people won’t stop to sit down, prepare several clip-boards that people can use to write quick letters and sign the petition. For a worship service or concert, distribute the materials ahead of time in the pews or the auditorium, or include them as packets in the bulletin or program.

6. Conduct the Offering of Letters
Find a few people to sit down and write whenever the table is empty. If people see others participating, they are more likely to participate as well. Assign someone to take photographs to share later on Facebook or elsewhere.

Have your team members act as shepherds, guiding people gently to the tables, answering questions, and helping people who are physically challenged to participate. Encourage participants to write letters with the group. Taking materials home generally produces fewer letters since people tend to forget or always intend to do it later.

Gather the completed letters in baskets or piles. At churches, place the letters in the offering plate and pray for their success. This action teaches everyone in church that persistent advocacy is an integral part of stewardship.

7. Count, Stamp, and Mail the Letters
Write down the number of letters written to each member of Congress. Affix proper postage to each letter and mail each separately to the appropriate address. Then celebrate with your team members. Every letter written is a triumph and will influence legislation. Remember to thank your organization’s leaders, staff, and those who wrote letters.

8. Send Your Petition to Bread for the World and Provide Feedback
This step is extremely important. Bread for the World will be delivering all petitions to the White House. We need as many signatures as possible to effect change. Use the prepaid response envelope in the front pocket of this kit to send us your petition. If you do not have the envelope, send the petitions to Bread for the World Offering of Letters, 425 3rd St SW, Suite 1200, Washing D.C. 20024.

Also please include the feedback form and participant sign-in sheet (in the back pocket of the Offering of Letters kit and at www.bread.org/go/OL).

9. Stay Connected
Follow the progress of the Offering of Letters campaign through Bread for the World’s website and through contact with your regional organizer. Relay this information to team members as a way of staying engaged. Update your church or campus as the campaign progresses. For suggestion on staying involved, read “Bread for the World Online” on page 18.

10. Take the Next Steps
Follow up your Offering of Letters by scheduling an in-person meeting or a phone call with your representative or senators. Your organizer can provide you with an agenda and guidance on the process.

Consider turning your short-term Offering of Letters team into an ongoing team (or form a new one) focused on

1. continued advocacy actions throughout the year,
2. educating yourselves and others in your community,
3. outreach to other people at your church or campus, and
4. engaging media with letters to the editor and posts on social media platforms.

Keep your organizer informed about your actions and plans. You can find your organizer’s contact information in the back pocket of this kit.

Activity: Ensuring everyone a place at the table

This activity uses tables to spark discussion about the importance of making certain that everyone has access to food. Participants are encouraged to consider ways that government policies and programs expand the size of the table so that more hungry people can eat.

1. Start by gathering and assembling as many small tables and chairs as you can. Folding TV trays and end tables will work. Be sure to have a large table in the room as well.
2. Place your smallest table in the middle of the room. Have members of your group sit around it. Ask, “How many people have a place at the table? If only those people sitting at the table have access to food, what happens to everyone else in the room?”
3. Now ask your group to think about the programs and policies that make it possible for more hungry people to eat. Add additional small tables representing these programs. Ask: “How many people have a place at the table now?”
4. Place your largest table at the center of the room. Declare that the new table represents the leadership that could come from the president and Congress if they set a goal and work together to end hunger. Then move the tables representing the various programs and policies so that they connect with the big table. Ask: “Now how many people have a place at the table?” Remind participants that supportive policies and programs depend upon political will.
5. Now that everybody is sitting at the table, use this opportunity to have them sign the petition to the president and write letters to members of Congress.

Each year, Bread for the World members write thousands of letters to members of Congress, advocating for policies that help end hunger in the United States and around the world.

Laura Elizabeth Pohl/Bread for the World
Bread for the World provides tools to help your church learn more about hunger, prayer for hungry people, and advocate to end hunger.

Celebrate Bread for the World Sunday, an annual opportunity for your church or campus to renew its commitment to overcoming hunger. On October 20, 2013, or another Sunday this fall, worshippers will lift their voices on behalf of hungry and poor people. View www.bread.org/sunday for more details.

Subscribe to Bread for the Preacher, a free monthly email message for busypastors. Each edition features lectionary-based preaching aids and worship resources that address issues of hunger and poverty. Sign up at www.bread.org/go/preacher.

To read Bread for the World organizer. Your organizer’s or local activist can come to your church the details of the Offering of Letters. Tell them why this is important, grounding your words in your own experience of faith. Ultimately, you best know your faith community and what speaks to their hearts, but here are some ideas that can help you develop your announcement:

- Tell a personal story or explain why advocating on behalf of poor and hungry people is a valuable part of your faith walk.

- Connect the Offering of Letters to the day’s sermon, reiterating any points made by the pastor or speaker about helping hungry and poor people.

- Present a skit with your ministry team encouraging congregants to live out their faith through advocacy.

- Show one of the short Offering of Letters videos that speaks to you, followed by an announcement of where and when the Offering will take place, why you’ll be participating, and how people can see the entire A Place at the Table film.

- Compare current facts on hunger and poverty to God’s vision to help congregants re-envision the world. Recite a few facts from the Hunger and Poverty Facts sheet in the front pocket of this kit and talk about how those facts would change in a world in which everyone has a place at the table.

End a service event for a way way

- Invite a speaker. A Bread for the World organizer or local activist can come to your campus to speak about the 2013 Offering of Letters or about solutions to hunger and poverty. For larger audiences or for additional speaker ideas, contact your Bread for the World organizer. Your organizer’s contact information is located in the back pocket of this kit, or online at www.bread.org/go/OL.

- Use social media. Get the word out about Bread for the World’s work to end hunger in the United States and around the world. “Like” us on Facebook (facebook.com/breadfortheworld) or follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/breadfortheworld). Encourage others to check out our blog at www.bread.org/blog. Share advocacy ideas and tell others what you’re doing!

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**Announce your Offering of Letters**

**Pulpit Announcement**

Since the announcement is part of the worship service, it should reflect the experience of worship–encouraging faith and understanding of God’s message. Don’t just tell the congregation the details of the Offering of Letters. Tell them why this is important, grounding your words in your own experience of faith. Ultimately, you best know your faith community and what speaks to their hearts, but here are some ideas that can help you develop your announcement:

- Tell a personal story or explain why advocating on behalf of poor and hungry people is a valuable part of your faith walk.

- Connect the Offering of Letters to the day’s sermon, reiterating any points made by the pastor or speaker about helping hungry and poor people.

- Present a skit with your ministry team encouraging congregants to live out their faith through advocacy.

- Show one of the short Offering of Letters videos that speaks to you, followed by an announcement of where and when the Offering will take place, why you’ll be participating, and how people can see the entire A Place at the Table film.

- Compare current facts on hunger and poverty to God’s vision to help congregants re-envision the world. Recite a few facts from the Hunger and Poverty Facts sheet in the front pocket of this kit and talk about how those facts would change in a world in which everyone has a place at the table.

**Sample Wording for a Pulpit Announcement**

Relate personal experience or facts about hunger.

What would it take to realize God’s vision for a world in which everyone has a place at the table? We have the resources now to feed all people, but we need the political will to make it happen. Our president and Congress could craft policies that establish pathways out of poverty so that all people can find a place at the table. This is God’s vision. But leadership must come from God’s people; you and me.

That is why I am asking you to join me in Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters on [date/time/place] to write letters to your members of Congress asking them to make a place at the table for hungry people. I am also asking you to sign a petition to the president urging him to set a goal and work with Congress to end hunger in the United States and abroad.

**Social Media**

Many churches reach new audiences and keep their congregation informed of upcoming events through Facebook or Twitter. Does your church or pastor have a blog on which to announce an Offering of Letters? Consider posting pictures after the event and writing about what you have accomplished.

**Sample Facebook Post**

Join us [date] as we put our faith into action. We will be conducing a Bread for the World Offering of Letters, asking our president and members of Congress to enact a plan to end hunger. We will begin with an adults forum on hunger at [time/place], followed by letter writing and a blessing of the letters before we send them to Washington, D.C.

[Find an Offering of Letters picture to go with your announce ment at www.bread.org/go/OL, or link to one of this year’s Offering of Letters videos at that same location.]

**Sample Tweet**

Join us for an Offering of Letters [date] & ask Congress & the president to prioritize hunger (calendar link) #hunger2014 endhunger.
Bread for the World Online
Web resources, videos, and social media tools

Bread for the World’s website, email, and social media tools will help you respond quickly to Congress throughout the year. The Offering of Letters website (www.bread.org/go/OOL) contains the latest fact sheets, sample letters to Congress, statistics, and status updates. You will also find multimedia stories of real people who will be hurt by cuts to hunger-relief programs. You can also use these resources to stay abreast of the latest developments:

- Email and Action Alerts. Bread’s action alerts are critical tools for building political will in Washington, D.C. When hundreds of constituents join their voices on an issue, they can often influence the outcome of votes in Congress. To sign up for action alerts, visit www.bread.org and fill out the email sign-up form.

- National Call. Register for this monthly discussion of current legislative priorities and actions with Bread for the World staff and activists. The call also gives updates on Offering of Letters campaigns. To participate, visit www.bread.org/events and sign up for the grassroots webinar and conference call.

- Bread Organizers. Stay updated on developments and resources by keeping in touch with Bread organizers. Find contact information for your organizer in the back pocket of this kit or at www.bread.org/contact.

- Bread Blog. Follow day-to-day updates, stories, and other Offering of Letters resources. Each Wednesday while Congress is in session, we will post an update of what’s happening on Capitol Hill.

- Social Media. Use both Facebook and Twitter to publicly tell members of Congress that everyone deserves #placeatetable (2013 Offering of Letters hashtag).

- “Like” our Facebook page and join the conversation (facebook.com/breadfortheworld).

- Follow us on Twitter and share news and information with your own networks (twitter.com/breaditheworld).

- RSS Feed. Make sure you get the latest updates by subscribing to Bread for the World’s RSS feed (www.bread.org/rss).

- Photos and videos: Videos for this year’s Offering of Letters are available on the DVD in the front pocket of this kit and at www.bread.org/go/OOL. See next page. If you need additional pictures or videos for your presentation, you can download or link to them at Bread’s Flickr page (www.flickr.com/bread-forthework) and Bread’s YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/breadfortheworld).

If you don’t have easy access to the Internet, please contact your regional organizer and ask him or her to update you by phone or mail as information becomes available.

The best resource for this Offering of Letters campaign is your passion and commitment to the issue. Share resources and inspire others, since it takes an organized and vocal grassroots to change the political will in Congress.

The Bread for the World Videos

The DVD included in the front pocket of this kit consists of several videos and movie clips to help explain how Bread for the World influences our elected leaders, as well as stories of people touched by hunger and poverty. Those videos are also available on the Offering of Letters website, along with other video resources to help you emphasize the compelling need for government policies to end hunger. Links to these resources can be sent to email lists, fellow congregants, or friends in preparation for an Offering of Letters.

Videos can also be presented to a congregation or campus group during worship, in a class, during an event, or while letters are being written. You can play the DVD or stream the videos from the Offering of Letters website. Both the DVD and the website include a document with tips for presenting videos with your Offering of Letters.

*Malnutrition Is Everywhere* is a Bread for the World video produced for the 2013 Offering of Letters. The video illustrates the benefits of poverty-focused development assistance. In this picture, Tilkumari Rizal (left) and Sharmila Chaudhari (right) feed their underweight children Ritik, 8 months (left), and Sarjana, 19 months (right), at the Nutrition Rehabilitation Home in Dhangadi, Nepal.

The 2013 Hunger Report

As you advocate for stronger leadership from the president and Congress toward ending hunger, be sure to read Bread for the World Institute’s 2013 Hunger Report, *Within Reach: Global Development Goals*. The report calls for a renewed push to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and set a new goal to end hunger entirely in the near future. The MDGs form a plan—agreed to by most countries and all the leading development institutions—to meet the needs of the world’s poorest people. The international community has made substantial progress toward a hunger-free world since setting those goals in 2000.

Your group may be especially interested in the report’s six-session Christian study guide, which invites participants to consider how they might take action in response to the issues discussed in this report. Each session includes a biblical reflection, discussion questions, a summary of a Hunger Report theme, and suggested activities. Find the 2013 Hunger Report and study guide at www.bread.org/go/hunger2013.
Hunger at Home

Barbie Izquierdo is a young woman who has found the task of feeding her children challenging. Having lost her job during the recession, she was often unable to buy enough food for her daughter, son, and herself. Looking back on those days, Barbie recalls thinking, “I barely have nothing left. What do I give them? Some days, Barbie skipped meals to make sure that her children ate.

A Place at the Table

How is it possible that people in this country continue to go hungry, despite our abundance of food? A Place at the Table, a new eye-opening documentary, answers that question through the lives of three people. Barbie, a young Philadelphia schoolteacher, fights to make ends meet and break the cycle of poverty. Rosie, an imaginative fifth-grader, tries to distract her mind from hunger pangs as she learns and grows in rural Colorado. And Tremaina, a sunny Mississippi second-grader, struggles with health problems caused by the poor nutritional value of the food that her mother can afford. Their stories reveal the depth of the hunger crisis in America and the factors that drive it.

The film also shows that we have made progress against hunger in the past—and that we can do it again. When film directors Krist Jacobson and Lori Silverbush approached Bread for the World board member Terry Meehan, seeking support for A Place at the Table, we quickly decided to become a partner on the project. We hope that the film will have as great an effect on public opinion and policy as did the 1968 CBS special, Hunger in America.

After watching Hunger in America, many shocked viewers called their members of Congress, demanding that something be done. In response, Congress passed bipartisan laws creating and funding the federal programs that all but eradicated domestic hunger by the end of the 1970s.

“It was really inspirational to us that a piece of filmmaking back in 1968 was able to have such a pronounced effect on public policy,” said Jacobson. “We figured that if it worked once, maybe it could work again.”

It all came together when Participant Media came on board to finance the film, followed by Magnolia Pictures as the distributor.

“How do we take an issue that is so shocking—with 1 out of 4 children food insecure—and raise awareness and make people take action?” asked Diane Weyermann of Participant Media. “In the America I live in, hunger is not acceptable.”

We are pleased that the launch of A Place at the Table coincides with Bread for the World’s 2013 Offering of Letters. Together, they magnify our focus on ending hunger through changes in public policy. Our association with Participant Media does not end when the film hits theaters across the country. We are also partners on the social action campaign accompanying the film.

Through A Place at the Table’s social action campaign (www.takepart.com/table), Bread members have more avenues for action—at both the local and the national level. Bread for the World and Participant Media will regularly ask our audiences to take action throughout this joint campaign.

“Jesuits tells us to give them something to eat, and the film shows that our churches do a good job of providing food through food pantries and soup kitchens,” said Bread for the World President David Beckmann. “It also shows that this will never be enough. We need to demand that our government get serious about ending hunger.”

Use A Place at the Table to Enhance Your Offering of Letters

A Place at the Table is an excellent resource for its in-depth examination of the roots of hunger. The stories in the film give life to the issues for which we are advocating in Bread for the World’s 2013 Offering of Letters.

We recommend that your congregation see the movie as a group, even though you can also view the movie through iTunes, Amazon, and other video-on-demand services. For group screenings, ask about the film and movie’s venue’s actions at FOOD 7277.

• Encourage your youth group, Bible study group, or other group to see A Place at the Table together when it opens in your town. For group ticket purchases, please contact Jackie Papier at 310-488-6003 or jackiepapier@hotmail.com.
• Book an entire showing of A Place at the Table, and use the occasion to raise money for local food charities, church projects, or Bread for the World. Again, contact Jackie Papier at 310-488-6003, jackiepapier@hotmail.com.
• Organize a panel discussion to follow a viewing of A Place at the Table. If you want to use the theater for the discussion, you may need to purchase two back-to-back showings. Ask local food bank directors, anti-hunger activists, and pastors to speak. End the event by asking the audience to write their members of Congress and to take the current action in the movie’s national action database (www.takepart.com/table) or at Bread’s site (www.bread.org/go/OE).

• At church, organize a one-hour Bible study or Sunday school session using the special study guide we have developed to accompany A Place at the Table. You can download the study guide, “No Place at the Table” at www.bread.org/go/OE.

• If you need Bread’s help in organizing these events or have other ideas for using A Place at the Table in your advocacy, please contact a Bread organizer. A trailer and clips from the movie are included in the DVD accompanying this kit.

Hunger in the Classroom

Like a lot of kids her age, Colorado elementary school student Rosie Casey sometimes loses focus during class. Her teacher, Nichol, who is used to students occasionally daydreaming during lessons, taught Rosie an exercise to help her concentrate. Leslie took Rosie to write the word “focus” on a little sticker and look at it every time she felt her mind start to drift. Still, Rosie struggled to pay attention.

“I just really felt she wasn’t really applying herself in the classroom and I couldn’t figure out where that attitude was coming from,” Leslie says. The teacher later learned that when Rosie stared off into space for long periods, it wasn’t because she was thinking about cartoons, her friends, or activities. She was thinking about food. “I struggle a lot and most of the time it’s because my stomach is really hurting,” Rosie says. “I start yawning and then I zone out and I’m just looking at the teacher and I look at her and all I think about is food. Sometimes when I look at her I envision her as a banana so she goes like a banana and everybody in the class is like apes and oranges and then I’m like, so great.”

Rosie has a network of caring people in her community that provide her and her family with food. Her pastor, Bob Wilson, runs a food pantry at the family’s church. Leslie delivers food to Rosie’s home each week in an effort to help her stay off the hunger that could prevent her from reaching her full learning potential. Still, it’s not enough. The work of churches and food banks and good Samaritans is vital, but it isn’t enough to combat hunger, not at a time when the need for food is so great. In order to help Rosie and children like her, federal safety net programs that help families lift themselves out of poverty must be protected.

Documenting Hunger

A new movie, A Place at the Table, reveals the persistence of hunger in America.

A Place at the Table

20 Bread for the World • www.bread.org/go/OE
Progress on Hunger and Poverty
Excerpt from Bread for the World Institute’s 2013 Hunger Report

In 1964, as the Vietnam War in South-East Asia was escalating, President Lyndon Johnson launched a domestic War on Poverty. It was the first and only time that the United States set a goal to end poverty. It was fought with several newly established anti-poverty programs, such as Head Start, Medicaid, and Medicare. Improvements were also made to existing programs like Social Security, food stamps, and child nutrition programs.

The first decade of the initiative took place during a period of rapid economic growth. But as the economy sputtered in the 1970s, and then sank into a deep recession in the early 1980s, funding for social programs was cut, and the progress achieved during the first decade of the War on Poverty came to a halt.

Economic growth is necessary, but not sufficient to end poverty and hunger. Overall, the U.S. economy has continued growing since the 1960s, but the rewards of this growth have not been equally shared. Every year, millions of Americans—including 28 million children—live on only $2 a day or less, as reported in the most recent Census. All may not be starving, in large part thanks to federal nutrition programs, but they are hungry and malnourished.

The recent recession only worsened the hunger problem in the United States. Fortunately, the programs used by the government to fight the 1960s War on Poverty proved that they can still work today—provided they are well funded. What is lacking now is a goal that galvanizes the White House, Congress, and faith communities to end hunger.

In the developing world, goals have served us well in reducing hunger. The 2000s were a decade of extraordinary progress against global poverty. More people in developing countries escaped poverty during the 2000s than any other decade in history. More importantly, progress occurred in every major region of the world. It may not be possible to establish a direct causal link, but it is no coincidence that this progress coincided with global efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Since 2000, the MDGs have been the dominant global development framework, and they have galvanized public support around the world for ending hunger and extreme poverty. When the MDGs were launched in the year 2000, leaders from every country in the world pledged their support. Few could have known how influential these goals would become.

What progress has the MDGs helped deliver? Since 1990, the baseline year for measuring progress towards the MDGs, at least 75 percent of all participating countries have made progress in reducing poverty, hunger, and maternal/child mortality and in providing clean drinking water. Nearly two-thirds of countries have made progress in gender equality by improving girls’ enrollment in primary school. Between 1999 and 2005, the number of children dying of measles fell by 75 percent—from more than 500,000 deaths each year to about 126,000. Overall, child mortality has decreased by two-thirds, due largely to the continued rollout of vaccines. Investments in agriculture are 2.5 to 3 times more effective than nonagricultural investments in increasing the income of hungry and poor people. This makes sense because most of the world’s poor live in rural areas and earn their living from agriculture.

Since the MDGs were adopted, both developing country governments and aid donors have increased their investments in agriculture and rural development—but not soon enough and not by enough to accelerate larger reductions in hunger. In order to sync reductions in hunger with reductions in poverty, greater investments in agriculture are necessary and must target smallholder farmers. In 2009, the United States launched an ambitious new program, Feed the Future, making up for its longstanding neglect of agricultural development assistance.

All U.S. development assistance should make a priority of linking progress against poverty with reducing hunger and achieving the MDGs. Recent history with the War on Poverty and the MDGs shows us that we can end hunger if we set a goal and enact a plan. Domestically, we need to set this goal. Internationally, we need to maintain and increase funding for poverty-focused development programs. Achieving these goals will require your hard work, the commitment of other people of faith, the White House, and our members of Congress.

Bread for the World Institute’s 2013 Hunger Report, Within Reach: Global Development Goals, provides a wealth of background on the state of world hunger and hope for a hungry-free future. You can find a link to the Hunger Report on the Offering of Letters website or at www.hungerreport.org/2013.
A Prayer for Your Offering

Prepare a place at the table for all people

Loving God, we thank you for setting a place for us. At your table there is always plenty to eat and room for everyone. From our tables and by the work of our hands we now offer these letters to Congress (and this petition to the president). We ask you to bless these letters, that they might open the hearts of our leaders and encourage them to care for all of our brothers and sisters. It is our prayer that through renewed energy and a will to end hunger all people will find a place at the table. We pray especially for hungry and poor people and we ask that your tender love extends a circle of protection around programs vital to the most vulnerable among us. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Litany for an Offering of Letters

Leader: Loving God, Jesus likened your kingdom to a banquet and invited his followers to eat and drink at the table in remembrance. But when he saw injustice, he turned over tables in the temple. We honor you, generous God, for the abundance of creation.

People: You prepare a table before us.

Leader: We thank you, generous God, for giving manna to the Israelites—and to us when we find ourselves in places of wilderness.

People: You prepare a table before us.

Leader: We praise you, generous God, for the gift of Jesus, who modeled faithfulness to you and who feeds us with holy food and drink.

People: You prepare a table before us.

Leader: We admit, gracious God, that we have failed to assure that our neighbors at home and abroad have access to the food they need.

People: Overturn the tables in our hearts.

Leader: We confess, gracious God, our struggles to trust in your abundance.

People: Overturn the tables in our hearts.

Leader: We acknowledge, gracious God, our silence when we should have spoken and our passivity when we should have acted to end hunger.

People: Overturn the tables in our hearts.

Leader: And so loving God, we seek strength that we might do your will.

People: You prepare a table before us.

Leader: We ask that you lead our elected officials to use their power to end hunger in your world.

People: You prepare a table before us.

Leader: And we seek a place at your heavenly banquet, in your eternal kingdom.

People: You prepare a table before us.

All: Amen.

Personal letters are crucial and effective. But they are only the first step. Consider following up with a phone call, a letter to the editor, and a visit to the local offices of your members of Congress. Meet your senators or representative in Washington, D.C., during Bread for the World’s Lobby Day on June 11. For more on Lobby Day, visit www.bread.org/lobby.

Also consider joining Bread for the World members for training, fellowship, and advocacy at our National Gathering from June 8 – 10. For more information visit www.bread.org/gathering.

Pastor Dave Buerstetta blesses an Offering of Letters at the Woodridge United Methodist Church outside of Chicago, Ill. Assisting him are Jason Shubert (left) and Tim Waynick.
Very Important: Send Us Your Petition to the President!

Don’t forget to send us your petition—located in the front pocket with a prepaid envelope. Please include your 2013 Offering of Letters feedback form and participant sign-in sheet in that envelope as well. You may also submit your report online at www.bread.org/go/OL. Thank you!

Pocket Inserts

Front:
- DVD: Videos for Understanding and Presenting the 2013 Offering of Letters
- Petition to the President
- Envelope (for Petition, Feedback Form, and Sign-in Sheet)
- Hunger and Poverty Facts
- Glossary
- Church Bulletin Insert
- Church Brochure
- Act Now! Flier

Back:
- Feedback Form
- Participant Sign-in Sheet
- Organizers Contact Information
- Order Form for additional kits and other Bread resources
- Save-the-Date Posters
- Display Board Posters

Check our website for updates and other materials: www.bread.org/go/OL.
2006 Bread for the World members continued their winning record of significant increases in funding for programs that address the causes of poverty in developing nations. The $1.4 billion increase in 2006 went largely to addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Now that millions more people are receiving life-saving medications, more people in the working years of their lives are again able to produce food, care for their children, and contribute to their communities.

2007 This Offering sought to win broad reform in the U.S. farm bill—making commodity programs into a more equitable safety net for our nation’s farmers, and shifting additional resources into nutrition, conservation, and rural development programs. Though commodity payment programs were not substantially reformed, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 did include the largest-ever funding increase for food stamps and food banks—an additional $10 billion over 10 years.

2008 Bread for the World pushed for more and better international development assistance. Our efforts helped win a supplemental appropriation of $1.8 billion to respond to the global hunger crisis. Our efforts to garner cosponsors for the Global Poverty Act helped build the political will that helped initiate foreign assistance reform efforts in 2009.

2009 Bread for the World members urged Congress and the administration to reform the way we deliver foreign aid to make it more effective in fighting poverty. As a result of our efforts, bipartisan bills were introduced in the House and Senate to begin the process of reforming the Foreign Assistance Act. In addition, President Barack Obama and the State Department ordered reviews to better coordinate how the United States delivers foreign assistance. Congress also increased funding for programs that fight hunger and poverty worldwide.

2010 December was a historic month for Bread for the World, as Congress passed two bills for which we had been advocating. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act—a five-year renewal of child nutrition programs—authorized an increase of $4.5 billion over 10 years, the largest increase of its kind. The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010—a compromise tax package—included key tax credits for low-income working families. The law continued the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit improvements that were about to expire, which was the goal of this Offering. Congress extended the benefits for another two years, which lifts millions of low-income working families out of poverty.

2011 Because of an unprecedented pressure to cut programs vital to hungry and poor people, Bread had to refocus the 2011 Offering of Letters. While we continued to press forward with reforms to make U.S. foreign assistance more effective in reducing poverty, we also worked to create a circle of protection around programs that are critical to hungry and poor people. We prevented disproportionate cuts to these programs in the fiscal year 2011 budget. We also successfully advocated for important reforms to U.S. foreign assistance. Working with both Republican and Democratic members of Congress, Bread assisted in a House of Representatives bill that would promote better accountability, transparency, and efficiency in U.S. foreign assistance.

2012 In the face of continued unprecedented budget threats, Bread for the World called on Congress to maintain a circle of protection around funding for programs vital to hungry and poor people. The House passed proposals that would have cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) by nearly $170 billion over the next decade. Yet, after two years of budget fights and over $2 trillion of enacted deficit reduction, Congress made no major cuts to programs for hungry and poor people. Congress also extended for five years the current Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit benefits—assisting millions of low-income working families. In the final days of the 112th Congress, the House unanimously passed the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act, a bipartisan bill to improve efficiency among U.S. foreign aid programs. Unfortunately, the bill was held up in the Senate because of one senator who opposed it. We are optimistic that a similar bill will pass both the House and the Senate in the 113th Congress.

2013 The outcome depends on you!