

Ending hunger today,
together, and forever

Explored through the stories and
prayers of people who have used
food banks.

2026

Harvest reflection



Ending hunger at Harvest

Thank you for reflecting with us this Harvest

Many churches, individuals, faith and community groups give food to their local food bank at this time of year.

Thank you if you have already donated, or are planning to support your local food bank with a donation this Harvest. For as long as the support is needed, food banks will continue to be there for people in your community. Please join us in ending hunger today.

If you are able to, and would like to make a donation, please visit trussell.org.uk/donate-food to find your local food bank and explore how to best support them today.

Many of us donate to food banks at Harvest, but you might not have thought much about Harvest for a while – or perhaps even since primary school.

This reflection is chance to look again at the themes of gratitude and the provision God gives, especially while the world seems full of uncertainty, and hunger in the UK remains a huge challenge to face.

Ending hunger today, together, and forever at Harvest?

The Old Testament describes the festival of Shelters and the festival of First-fruits, both times where people would celebrate the goodness and provision of God. Traditionally in the UK, crops from the fields or allotments would adorn the altar or table at the front of our local church at Harvest time. When our hard work is successful, and our harvest is good, we gather it and share a moment of thankfulness, relief and joy. Hope is born for the future.

This Harvest reflection seeks to do the same thing. It gathers together the three ways in which we seek to end hunger. It will give you a taste of how – with our community of food banks, and the UK public doing their bit, and with you playing your part – we will be able to see a future where everyone can afford life's essentials.

Start exploring ending hunger with our short film:



trussell.org.uk/ending-hunger-film

Through the rest of this reflection we will share more of what we mean by ending hunger today, together, and forever, and how churches and people of faith are crucial to this. To bring this vision alive, we will share the stories, reflections and prayers of people who have faced hunger and hardship themselves. Along with these ideas, memories, and beautiful prayers, there will be practical steps you can take to learn more and begin to call for change yourself.

Our lived experience partners

This wonderful group is made up of people who have a lived experience of facing hardship, and being forced to use a food bank to survive.

They help us to understand how the right kind of support can make a difference, and build just systems that enable everyone to thrive. They share what is really helpful and loving to offer in our churches, to make everyone feel welcome – no matter their background. They support us in resources like this, to authentically share their experiences and, we hope, enable everyone reading to discover a new perspective on life, faith, and hope.

We hope you find exploring ending hunger today, together and forever with us meaningful. Perhaps read through these pages slowly or spread them out over a few days.

If anything stands out, how could you share this with people you know? Which elements of the reflections could be shared with a small group or a church you're part of?

If you're facing hunger yourself, please visit

trussell.org.uk/emergency-food – or call **01722 580 180**

Some of these reflections are directly about Harvest, but as we said earlier, Harvest can sometimes be a topic that we left behind at school.

With this in mind, we've asked our partners to also reflect more generally about being together, gratitude, and being thankful to God – things we think are good to reflect on at any stage of life!

In gratitude this Harvest.

Jess Foster

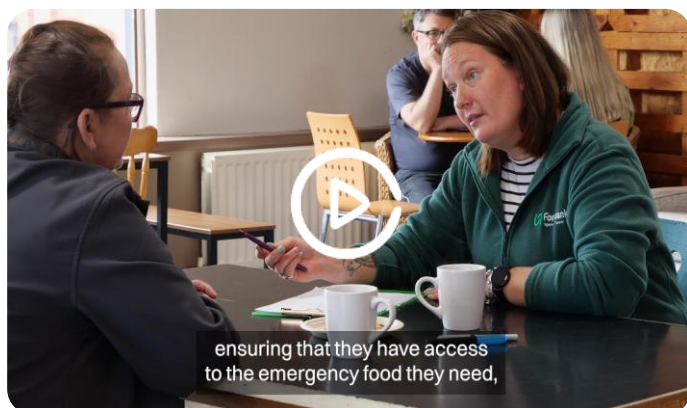
Head of Church Engagement



Ending hunger today

Why and how does this happen in food banks?

Start exploring ending hunger today with our short film:



trussell.org.uk/today-film

The four values we share with our community of food banks are: compassion, dignity, justice, and community. Together with food banks we are also inspired by the Bible verse Micah 6:8:

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8 (NIV)

When we face a crisis in life with finances, we need support today. We need people around us (community) reminding us that it's the systems in society (justice, or lack of) which create and sustain inequality and hardship. Hunger is not a food problem, but an income problem.

But in the moment of crisis and not being able to afford the essentials, a food bank can offer us hope. They offer us a kind welcome, conversation, and a parcel of food to accompany us through the worst moments (compassion). They treat us as fully human, made in the image of God (dignity). This compassion reminds us of the Micah 6:8 phrase 'to love mercy' which is sometimes translated as 'loving-mercy' or 'loving-kindness'.

The support in a food bank is also much more than food. Many food banks offer access to a range of services like debt advice, health information, and for those hosted in churches, access to that church family too.



A 'cup of tea' is something Trussell and food banks think a lot about. Not just how quickly we can get the food parcels to people who need them, but how we connect with people and offer them a moment of care and peace in what is a difficult process. A 'cup of tea' refers to the warm welcome, compassionate conversations, and the human touch we seek to offer.

This is also something that host churches or volunteers from other churches can offer to a food bank. Being there to chat, pray if wanted, or just be alongside people in a food bank is really valued and important.

Some food banks have official chaplains ('ordained' or 'lay') for people accessing support, but also for their staff and volunteers too. It might be worth exploring what happens at your local food bank, and seeing if you could offer something to add to their 'cup of tea' practice in their sessions if you feel able.

Shirley's reflection



One of our lived experience partners, Shirley, reflects below on a time she was welcomed at a church group, when things didn't go quite to plan.

A bit about Shirley

“

My work with Trussell fosters fellowship and relationship between both community and volunteers. A shared cup of tea is a fine reward!

”

Fellowship over food, all together

Our church's small group is called 'Sabbath meal'. We always have a good time, a good time of fellowship together, and the food's pretty spot on as well.

We can have all kinds of things. We've had all kinds of people join us sometimes, like asylum seekers who bring recipes from their own cultures.

It's a time of sharing food, and then prayers at the end for anybody that needs them, or if we know of anybody that needs prayer. They're just like another family, really. I mean, probably nicer than some families! We all get on and everybody's lovely.

Confusion into care

It's so strange because I had it in my diary that 'Sabbath meal' would be on one night and I turned up there and I walked in, and I could see they were having work done in the house.

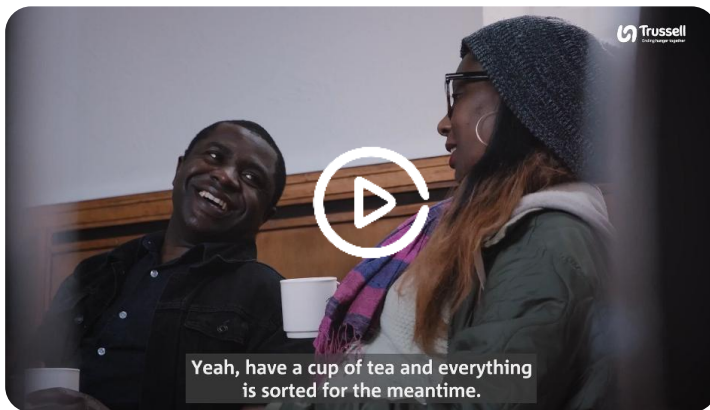
"Flipping heck!" I said, "I can't see much eating going on here tonight," and Sam, the host, said, "Oh, you thought you've come in to eat?" I said: "Well, yeah, that was the whole idea of me being here." Anyway, I had a cup of coffee with Sam's wife, Jill. I've known her for a long time, from the beginning of my Christian journey probably.

So from being completely confused myself and thinking, 'are we meeting or not?', I had a cup of coffee with Jill, and a good natter - and came away feeling quite nourished. It was nice.

It's nice to keep in touch with people. Jill was saying: 'I remember you from our Alpha days'. I said 'oh, no, so that seems like forever ago now.'

I really enjoyed the Alpha Course. It was what brought me back to the Church as an adult.

Explore compassion more in our 'cup of tea' film:



trussell.org.uk/cup-of-tea

Shirley's Harvest prayer

Heavenly Father,

I pray for anyone who doesn't have a settled church at the moment. I remember Harvest Festival, as a child, all taking something to put on the Harvest table at church. A nice time of giving.

Help us, Father, to be thankful. Help us to see when we have enough, really. Show us where we can help, as there are plenty of people that don't have enough.

Remind us every morning we wake up – to be grateful.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.

Ending hunger together

Ending hunger today with a food parcel makes sense, and is what most people will think about when they hear 'food bank' or 'Trussell'. But what about 'together' and 'forever'? Thinking about ending hunger together can affect how things happen in food banks, and also how we call for UK-wide change – there's a lot we can explore.

Start exploring ending hunger today with our short film:



trussell.org.uk/together-film

As we heard in some of the films so far, 'together' can mean joining groups locally, getting more holistic support in place, or joining food banks across the UK in campaigning. We find more inspiration for 'together' in Micah 6:8 too: 'act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.' Walk humbly here could mean: 'think about your individual life with God', but we also know that community is so central in the Bible, and the way Jesus invites his followers to live.

For us, walking humbly only makes sense together. For us to be humble before God we must acknowledge and celebrate that we are neighbours, loving people around us 'as people like ourselves'.

If we haven't faced hunger or hardship ourselves, we can sometimes imagine that it 'wouldn't happen to someone like me'. This can be something we tell ourselves as we subconsciously try to defend ourselves from the trauma we see or imagine. We can all face life changing circumstances which might mean we need to turn to a food bank to survive.

So when thinking about ending hunger together, walking humbly with people who face or have faced hunger and hardship is key for us. This is the source of our passion at Trussell for hearing the voice of people with a lived experience of hunger and hardship.



Our lived experience partner Dee reflects on this humility, the reason why churches and food banks offer such care, and the power of coming together.

Dee's reflection



A bit about Dee

“

I work with Trussell as a lived experience partner, using my story to highlight the need and importance of food banks – but I believe a time will come when food banks are no longer needed, as everyone will have enough to survive. I use my work with Trussell and life's experience to work with local communities in my area.

”

Meals together

I love it when churches come together for a meal, and everyone that is able to bring a food item.

It doesn't seem like much, but collectively, we have enough for everyone and those that weren't able to bring anything are also fed.

Dee's Harvest prayer

God our Father,

When we were children, sharing often came naturally. We gladly shared our toys, our food, our laughter, and our time. As we have grown older, many of us have become more hesitant to share the gifts and blessings You have given us.

Lord, speak to our hearts and remind us that we are Your beloved children. Help us to see that everything we have comes from You and is meant to be a blessing to others. Fill us with generous spirits, willing hands, and joyful hearts.

Teach us that sharing what we have is not a burden, but a gift. May we find joy in giving, comfort in helping, and gratitude in serving others. Let us reflect Your unconditional love by freely sharing our time, talents, resources, and compassion with those around us.

May our generosity be a witness to Your goodness, and may our acts of sharing draw others closer to Your love.

May we find joy in giving and become a blessing to others.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

To think more about how we can walk humbly better as churches, watch our film about opening the doors of our churches even wider to welcome people who are facing hardship and hunger:



trussell.org.uk/welcoming-churches

Ending hunger forever

Start exploring ending hunger forever with our short film:



trussell.org.uk/forever-film

‘Ending hunger forever’ is also inspired by Micah 6:8, where we are called to ‘act justly’. Again, you could see this as something you can do alone, ‘in this instance, I will act in a just way’, but when we combine this with walking humbly together, we see more here.

Justice, and being in ‘right-relationship’ can extend to entire groups of people. We often call this ‘social justice’. We see this time and again in the Bible: where God is not happy with the way a society is living and commands or invites another way. While we can show acts of kindness (loving mercy) to individuals, to establish a wider reality of social justice takes a whole group, movement or indeed entire society to decide something together and make a change.

The Essentials Guarantee

Poverty has many aspects, and many changes are needed to improve life for everyone. When we think about ending hunger, we have developed an idea and campaign with the Jospeh Rowntree Foundation called ‘Guarantee our Essentials’. The idea is that when we find ourselves in financial hardship, the level of support we receive through social security should match the costs of essentials, set by an independent process and body, and not be dragged below this level for any reason. There is currently a shortfall between payments and costs, and people are still forced to turn to a food bank to survive (even some people who are in work and receive Universal Credit as an income top-up!).

We said earlier that hunger is an income problem (not a food one). We know that when Universal Credit payments have been increased, we see a decrease in the use of food banks for emergency food. An Essentials Guarantee would mean that people could go to a supermarket and shop for what they want – a dignity we all desire.

An Essentials Guarantee would reduce the need for food banks. We know the majority of the UK public agree that our social security system should cover essentials costs. If we can show this level of support to the UK government, we could change the system and bring about a more ^ojust future: where the support we agree should be there, is actually offered when we need it. This is the core of what we see as ending hunger forever, and the basis of a system where food banks don't need to provide emergency food.

Our lived experience partner Steve's reflection below is on a similar theme. Steve reflects on Harvest, and a story Jesus tells about making sure people do what they can to ensure the community don't face hunger in the future.

Steve's reflection



A bit about Steve

“

I'm passionate about churches supporting food banks and thinking about how people of all abilities are welcomed, and their gifts celebrated and put to good use. I volunteer at my local food bank and also speak with Trussell at events.

”

Moving to the city

Having grown up in a rural area and moved to London, one thing I noticed was that an urban environment makes it easy to miss the significance of Harvest.

The idea of seeing the foods grow in the field, harvesting them and then having a celebration for it can easily be forgotten.

Hoarding, or gathering to share?

The celebration of Harvest is to share what has been gathered and have fellowship with others.

In Luke 16 verses 13-21, the farmer builds bigger barns to hoard his crops rather than sharing with people who need food. Instead of enjoying it with the community, his legacy is a store of his wealth wasting away.

We might not hoard grain, but there are other types of riches which we could be tempted to collect. Watches, cars, shoes, or whatever it is. Are they helping us to make a difference to people around us?

Steve's Harvest prayer

God who provides,

Thank you for this story of the farmer, and the message of the Harvest season.

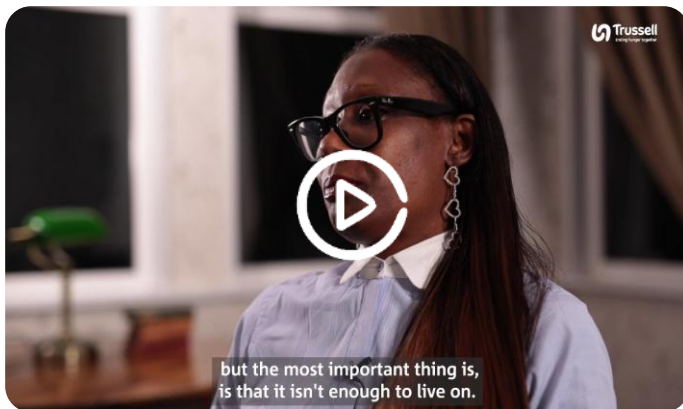
May we hear the challenge to be part of something that makes the world a bit better.

May we hoard hope, kindness and justice, only long enough for them to jump-start our neighbours to gather more of these too.

Thank you that you showed us how to empty ourselves, to give it all away in the name of love.

Amen.

To explore calling for justice and the difference an Essentials Guarantee would make, watch our short film:



trussell.org.uk/church-goe-film

Being realistic

We know that ending hunger today, together, and forever will not happen overnight. To achieve this, we seek to work with people, communities and churches who are ready to explore what justice and walking humbly in 'right relationship' with each other and God can mean.

Together, we need to be ready for the long haul – the wrestling that will bring about transformed systems, driven by people who have open hearts, minds and hands.

Together we can bring heaven a little closer to earth.

Our final lived experience reflection is on the theme of resilience and keeping going while there's a tough road ahead. As we seek to end hunger, we'll need a hefty portion of resilience and gratitude. Jesus speaks about each day having enough worries of its own. He was used to hardship and ultimately experienced the pain of the cross on Good Friday. Finding ways to be resilient as we walk humbly towards a more just future will be crucial to keeping going.

When things are tough, it might be good to remember how Jesus approached his final meal with his followers and friends before he was arrested. In The Last Supper, Jesus repeats a prayer of blessing over the bread and thanks God for these good gifts of the earth. Even in the face of uncertainty, violence and evil, Jesus is full of gratitude and teaches his followers to remember him in this way.



Our lived experience partner Toni reflects on resilience.

Toni's reflection



A bit about Toni

“

I help others like neighbours, family (and family bring friends); the majority are kids and adults with extra needs and health plans. With Trussell I take part in participation meetings where I contribute from my lived experience of poverty to the work of food banks and their mission to end the need for them. My Christian faith guides everything I do. I host a small monthly gathering in my home where friends share our beliefs and support one another.

”

The potato poem prayer

All about resilience

**At Harvest time our Lord , we thank you for the wheat in our fields,
For the vine, for all you yield,
As well as the lowly little spud, made into a chip.**

**Who looked at the fire and said: 'OK'
You would think the heat would kill it off!**

**Oh no, heat tried its worst but missed.
The chip came out golden and crisp, unbowed.**

Pure resilience... with a side of pride...

**When life turns the heat up way high,
Lord teach us to hold on to Romans 5:3-4:
Suffering builds endurance and a hope that remains steadfast...**

**Even things so crumbled can fit your wondrous plan.
Here it comes... our praise both small and grand,
for Harvest presents from your own beloved hand.**

**For bread and for fruit, especially for chips that proclaim:
'You can wear me down: but I will crunch again.'**

Ending our Harvest reflection

Thank you for spending time with us through these reflections and films.

As we've said, there's a long way to go, but with you, our community of food banks, churches, and people who have faced hunger and hardship on our side: we believe we have all the right players to end hunger.

What's next?

If you'd like to further explore ending hunger together, and walking humbly, you can have a look at our Walking Humbly leader's booklet and Bible studies on our website:

View [Walking Humbly resources](#)

If you are interested in learning more about 'Guarantee our Essentials' and what churches can do to explore it and show their support, have a look at our information booklet.

View [Guarantee our Essentials booklet](#)

Donating to Trussell

Finally, if you are able to do so, we'd like to ask you to make a donation to us at Trussell. We know many of you are donating to your local food bank and this is really important – so thank you. Donations to Trussell support food banks, but also the work we do in ending hunger together and forever, as explored in this Harvest reflection.

If you are able to make a one off or regular gift to us, you'd be supporting our long term aims to reach a future where we can all afford life's essentials. [Donate today](#)

trussell.org.uk/churches

email us at **churches@trussell.org.uk**

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