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**CROP  
HUNGER  
WALK**

BY  **CWS**



## SERMON *Starter*



### Chickens, Beans and Big Dreams

The following Sermon Starters have been prepared by Community Engagement Specialist, Nick Gliha (M. Div 2019) and Community Engagement Manager, Andrew Gifford (M. Div 2010). Each sermon connects with a mission moment that we encourage someone from your mission's team or your team captain share during your worship service. The message outlines are put forth using a system that Nick was taught by one of his pastoral mentors.

#### **HEY:**

A story or attention grabber, generally not connected to the scripture story. Something that is timely and relatable to a modern hearer. For the sake of these sermon starters, we have connected them to one of the people our team met while visiting Kenya and Tanzania.

#### **YOU:**

How does this relate to the congregation?

#### **LOOK:**

What does the scripture and commentaries say?

#### **DO:**

What should the congregation do as a result? For the sake of these starters, we aim to connect the opening story and the scripture into an inspiring ending, rallying your congregation to participate in your local CROP Hunger Walk.



# SERMON INSPIRED BY MAMA NGUYO: 1 KINGS 17:1-16

## HEY/MISSION CONNECTION:

Can you recall a time when you felt the weight of one hardship after another, with no control over the circumstances? Felistus Nguyo, known as Mama Nguyo in her community, knows this struggle deeply. A widow raising seven children, she depends on farming to provide for them. But with Kenya's unpredictable climate and a devastating locust invasion destroying her crops, Mama Nguyo didn't know how she would make it until the next harvest. Yet, just as God provides for you and me, He, faithfully, provides for Mama Nguyo.

## YOU:

Invite the congregation to take a moment to consider their own hardships that they might be facing at this time or contextualize it to hardships your church family has faced in recent times. Perhaps this is health related, economics, loss of beloved members or family, feeling spiritually isolated or burnt out.

## LOOK:

This story introduces the prophet Elijah during a critical moment in Jewish history, when King Ahab had led the people to worship Ba'al, the god of weather. It marks the beginning of a larger narrative where God proves His sovereignty and loyalty to His people by overcoming Ba'al in the very areas he was believed to reign, starting with a drought and God's promise to bring rain "at my word".

In the meantime, Elijah is to drink from a stream until it dries up and he receives food daily from a raven. This is particularly important, as ravens would have been considered an unclean animal, challenging Elijah's established notions of cleanliness. When the river dries up, God commands Elijah to go to Zaraphath where he will receive food and water from a widow there. The significance here is twofold. First, Zaraphath was a gentile town and thus Elijah would have been a foreigner in foreign land. Second, widows were universally considered to be the most impoverished people at the time. Elijah had to trust not only that he would be safe, but that provision would come from two unlikely sources. When Elijah meets this woman and asks her for food and water, she acknowledges his faith (Your Lord and God), but refuses, explaining that she planned to use her last bit of food to feed herself and her child before they die. Miraculously, she does so, and Elijah's words prove to be true, providing lifelong food security for the woman and her child and breaking down the barriers of "us" and "them" between two cultures.

## DO:

Elijah's story shows the power of surrendering control and trusting God's provision, even when it comes from unexpected places. Similarly, the widow and her son remind us that God can transform the smallest resources into lasting prosperity. The CROP Hunger Walk is an opportunity for us to serve locally and globally through programs that bring dignity, sustainability and comfort to our neighbors in need—like Mama Nguyo. Through CWS, she received three chickens, which she cared for and grew into a flock of over 20. These chickens now provide food, income and fertilizer for her crops. "I am happy and doing so well now," Mama Nguyo says. The support she received didn't just help her survive the locust swarm—it gave her the tools to build a stronger future. May your steps in this year's CROP Hunger Walk be an expression of faith, and a reminder of God's provision for all of His people.

To learn more about  
this community in  
Kitui County, visit the  
Story of Change here!





# SERMON INSPIRED BY IOT DEVICES: MATTHEW 13: 1-9

## HEY/MISSION CONNECTION:

One of the first things many of us do in the morning is check the weather. It helps decide what to wear, what activities to plan and whether to water the plants. While not essential, without it, we might get caught in the rain, dress inappropriately or overwater the garden. But for farmers in rural Kitui County, Kenya, weather information is crucial. Due to a changing and unpredictable climate, these farmers are facing more failed harvests, severely impacting their livelihoods and ability to feed their families. Their experience mirrors the uncertainty in our scripture today—planting seeds without knowing if the soil is fertile or rocky until the harvest.

## YOU:

We naturally feel more secure when we have plenty of information. When we buy a car, we research the model, compare prices from different dealers, and request a Carfax report to understand its maintenance history and any past accidents. All of this helps us make an informed, confident decision. The same is true for our faith. Hearing just one interpretation of a scripture is a good start, but it doesn't give us a full understanding of the chapter or the Bible as a whole. We attend Bible studies, practice prayer, and show up for church—but still, we may not know how to live our faith in the world. Today, we'll explore the Parable of the Sower and offer a practical way to live out your faith through our local CROP Hunger Walk.

## LOOK:

It's very rare that Jesus explicitly tells us the meaning of his parables, but this is one of them where he does. Later in Matthew 13, He explains the meaning of the parable in this way: For those who hear the word of God and do not understand it, that seed is snatched away. Those who hear the word of God and, in the moment, are captured by it but quickly lose their motivation afterward are the ones on rocky soil who struggle to take root. But for those who are captured by the word of God, and it invokes a major change in their life, is the one who is cast on good soil. Church theology often discusses the relationship between being saved by faith and being saved by works. If one is truer than the other, does it diminish the importance of the other? Hardly. It is true that we are saved by faith and faith alone; but it's what we do with that salvation that determines the type of growth we have. Is our seed in rocky soil and only good on Sunday morning? Or is our seed in fertile soil because our lives have been radically changed, and we change others as a result. On this Sunday when we celebrate the CROP Hunger Walk, I want to invite you to consider participating in the event on [Date of your walk].

## DO:

At the top of the message, I mentioned that farmers in Kitui County, Kenya, did not have access to essential information that helped them feel more secure in their planting, cultivating and harvesting of their crops. Thanks to generous support from churches like our own who participate in the CROP Hunger Walk, CWS has been able to partner with these farmers by providing IoT devices (Internet of Things). IoT devices can read the quality of the soil and offer detailed weather forecasts. As a result, the communities have experienced much more successful harvests. Sometimes fertile soil is just a metaphor for our faith, but for those in Kitui, Kenya, it is a reality. Let us put our faith into action to ensure that the harvest – spiritual and literal – is bountiful.



To learn more about  
this community in  
Kitui County, visit the  
Story of Change here!





# SERMON INSPIRED BY MATUMAINI: MATTHEW 14: 13-21

## HEY:

What comes to mind when you hear the word “overwhelming”? For many of us, we think of so many urgent needs like world hunger, water access, medical care or struggles in our own communities. Sometimes, even small things—like a pile of dishes—can feel overwhelming. It's hard to begin with no clear place to start. But “overwhelming” can also be something positive, like God's “overwhelming grace and mercy” or the support we receive from others during tough times.

Today, I want to share a story of overwhelming need transforming into overwhelming love. It takes place in the Nyarugusu Refugee Camp in Tanzania, home to nearly 137,000 refugees where many experience hunger and instability daily. Addressing a need this large, can feel impossible. Yet, what started as a small gardening program by community members and CWS is growing into something much bigger. Matumaini Narceine, a refugee from Burundi, was one of the first farmers selected to participate in the program, which helps supplement food rations with sustainable crops. In her home country, women are often denied the opportunity to earn money, so being able to provide for her family was a powerful change. Grateful for the chance, Matumaini taught 15 others—8 of them women—how to grow their own vegetables.

It's overwhelming to think about feeding 137,000 people, but when everyone shares what they can, small efforts turn into big change and ensuring there's enough for all.

## YOU:

Invite the congregation to consider what things in their own lives or the life of your church might feel overwhelming right now and that might be made easier or made possible with the help of others to shoulder the burden. Maybe it's reactivating a cherished ministry project or starting a new one by having extra hands available. How can they turn to God and their support systems to take something from overwhelming need to overwhelming love?

## LOOK:

The story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 is the only miracle found in all four Gospels, highlighting a recurring theme in Israel's scriptures. Just as manna sustained the Israelites and Elijah and Elisha fed others, Jesus shows that there is always enough for everyone. In a desolate place with limited resources, Jesus challenges His disciples to believe that no one must be turned away. What they see as impossible, Jesus sees as certain. This truth remains today. When faced with overwhelming need, we often prioritize local over global needs, but Jesus teaches that all are worthy of care. The CROP Hunger Walk offers an opportunity to address both local and global needs, ensuring that “all ate and were filled.”

Notice the crowd wasn't fed with just bread—they were also given fish, providing protein and nutrition that bread alone couldn't offer. Jesus reminds us in Matthew that we “shall not live on bread alone.” He understood that a meal should nourish the body and restore dignity. Refugees often survive on basic rations, but no one should live on rations alone. The farming program provides more than food—it offers dignity, economic stability, and empowerment, ensuring all receive the nourishment and respect they deserve, no matter their circumstances.

## DO:

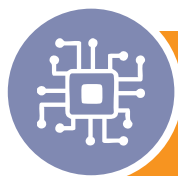
By participating in the CROP Hunger Walk you're helping men and women find stability in very unstable conditions. You are helping children grow strong and healthy thanks to fresh and varied vegetables. By participating in the walk, you are demonstrating the values of our faith which command us to feed those that are hungry and to believe in the possibility that there is enough for all.



To learn more about  
this community in  
Tanzania, visit the Story  
of Change here!







## Technology Helps Kenyan Farmers Adapt to Climate Changes

Our annual CROP Hunger Walk is underway. Today, I want to share just one of many stories to help paint a picture of the vast impact of CWS through the CROP Hunger Walk.

For 78 years, CWS has worked to transform communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. One of the greatest contributing factors to hunger is climate change.

In Kitui County, Kenya, communities experienced three difficult seasons of failed harvests due to drought. CWS began partnering in this area by providing new technology that helps farmers adapt to the changing climate.

CWS introduced new technology called IoT (Internet of Things) devices in this community. The IoT devices were used with 160 farmers to help relay detailed information to produce a more successful harvest. The community, including the youth, is so engaged in this process, including youth. Michael Mwendo, who is part of a CWS-supported youth entrepreneur program, monitors and ensures the safety of each IoT device. Thanks to the partnership between the community and CWS, the farmers had their first successful harvest in years!

For every \$500 our team raises, we can help provide communities with the information, training and resources they need to adapt to climate change and provide a diverse and abundant harvest with an IoT device. Their diets now include healthier foods that have brought noticeable change, changes that are improving the children's health. Farmers are also able to grow produce to help feed their chickens, expanding their possibilities and dreams even further.

Thank you for choosing generosity, compassion and service to others!

### ACCOMPANYING PRAYER

Loving Creator: As we prepare for our CROP Hunger Walk, help us remember those who are experiencing hunger, poverty, disaster or displacement. Inspire us to do all we can as hunger fighters – to share our resources, to advocate for better climate policies, and to show love and mercy for all.

We are grateful for the knowledge that helps farmers adapt to climate change and produce a more bountiful harvest. We are grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside communities with the tools, resources and training they need to provide for their families and communities.

Amen.



To learn more about  
this community in  
Kitui County, visit the  
Story of Change here!







## Chicken Farming for Everyone! (Children's Focus)

Hi everyone! I want to share about the CROP Hunger Walk and how it helps people. It helps people who don't have enough food to eat, both close to home and in other parts of the world. We want everyone to have enough food so they can be healthy, play, learn and grow.

I want to tell you a story about a small village in Tanzania, Africa. Families here used to have a hard time getting enough food, but together we are changing that. Now, these families have chickens and were taught how to take care of them so that they have enough healthy food, for all ages!

But it gets even more egg-citing—these families can sell some of their eggs and meat to their neighbors. The money they make helps them send their kids to school, fix up their houses and get clean water to drink.

These village families are so thankful for these programs and the help it brings. They are also thankful because the program embraces all types of God's children. Eight of the 30 people in this village farming program are people with disabilities.

One of these farmers is named Julius. Julius and his wife are both blind, but they have a successful chicken farming business thanks to the help of their farming group and children. Julius said, "They don't treat me different—they embrace me."

Julius and the other farmers are working together to provide healthy food and better homes for their community. They're also making sure everyone is included because we all have something special to share.

Did you know that just \$21 can buy five chickens for a family in Africa and change their lives?

As we walk in the CROP Hunger Walk, we think about Julius and people just like him all over the world. Together, we can make a real difference!

### PLEASE PRAY WITH ME:

God, thank you that we get to help people with the CROP Hunger Walk. We get to help people chicken farm so that they have good food and a better life. Thank you for Julius and his village that works hard to love each other, no matter what. They help teach us that we all have gifts to share. We can do more when we work together. Help us work together with our friends near and far so we can make this world a better place for all.

Amen.



To learn more about this  
African community, visit the  
Story of Change here!







## Planting Seeds of Hope and Equality

Did you know that 733 million people - nearly 10 percent of the world's population - face hunger each day (World Health Organization). World hunger is increasing due to factors such as climate change, poverty and conflict.

You can take steps to fight hunger in our community and around the world by joining our CROP Hunger Walk (ADD LOCAL DATE AND LOCATION.) Your gifts support the local work of (LOCAL AGENCY RECIPIENT/S) and the global hunger-fighting efforts of CWS.

Through your CROP Walk dollars, you are helping change the lives of people like Matumaini (Maah-TWO-Maa-KNEE), a lead farmer at the Nyaragusu (NAIR-EH-Goo-Sue) refugee camp in Tanzania. Matumaini is a refugee from Burundi and joined a rapidly growing vegetable farming program two years ago supported by CWS. Through the program, she received seeds and training to grow a variety of vegetables to earn an income and feed her family of 11.

In Matumaini's culture in Burundi, women weren't encouraged to earn their own income. CWS includes gender equality training into its programs across Africa, aiming for equal representation. Today, Matumaini proudly supports her family through her business and empowers others in her community. She and other participants are sharing their tools, seeds, and knowledge with others—many of them women—expanding the program's impact and changing more lives for good.

Matumaini says, "I am very thankful for this project! Mothers are moving to a certain stage just because of this project. Women are following me so that I can also give them trainings so they can get vegetables for themselves and their kids." A gift of just \$23 provides a vegetable start up pack for one farmer. You can help more mothers by joining our CROP Walk team or by donating today. Help us reach our team's goal of raising \$(Insert goal) for this year's walk.

The vegetable farming program is a beautiful example of the ripple effects of CWS projects, which provide tools and resources to help people help themselves and then extend that knowledge to others.

### PLEASE JOIN ME IN PRAYER:

Loving Creator: We are grateful for the lives changed through these programs, helping families improve their diets, overall health and their livelihoods. Thank you for people like Matumaini, who graciously share their knowledge with others and empower women in their communities to have gender equality and economic security. May we remember Matumaini and her community as we walk in the CROP Walk and be inspired by her example so that others may share in your bounty and your love.

Amen.

To learn more about this  
community in Tanzania, visit  
the Story of Change here!





## Chicken Farming Transforms Lives in Kenya



To learn more about this community in Kitui County, visit the Story of Change here!

On (local walk date), I invite you to join our team in the CROP Hunger Walk to raise awareness and raise funds to fight hunger locally and globally. When you participate in the CROP Hunger Walk, you help support the work of (Local recipient agency) and the global hunger-fighting efforts of CWS.

Today, I want to share how your support of the CROP Hunger Walk is making a difference for families in Kitui, a rural community with a population over 1 million. The people of Kitui have faced food shortages during periods of drought and when locusts swarmed their community and destroyed much of the crops.

With help from people like you, CWS is working with the community to support climate-friendly farming techniques and has launched a chicken farming program. One of the participants is Felistus Nguyo (phonetic spelling of her last name is EN-Guy-Oh), a widowed mother of seven children. “Mama Nguyo” – as she is known in her community – began the program with three chickens and has managed to grow her flock to 20 chickens in addition to purchasing a rooster on her own.

Mama Nguyo describes her chicken farming as her business and her livelihood. The chickens not only feed her family, but she uses the waste from her chickens to fertilize her own garden, which is now flourishing. The chickens also provide enough eggs and chickens to sell at the market. Mama Nguyo has been able to use the proceeds to support her family even further. Having been able to meet the most basic needs for herself and her family, she has even been able to provide new comfortable chairs for their home.

The CWS chicken farming program has helped Mama Nguyo and others in the community build a more stable future for their families. She expressed her immense gratitude for how this opportunity has changed her and her family’s stability and future by saying, “I am happy and doing so well now.”

This year, our team has a goal of (\$X). For every \$21 we raise as a team, we are empowering a family like Mama Nguyo’s by providing five chickens to feed their families and start their own businesses. You can be part of this transformation by joining our CROP Hunger Walk team or by making a donation to support our team.

Gracious God,

We thank You for the gift of community and the power of shared compassion. We lift up the people of Kitui, Kenya, and especially Mama Nguyo, whose resilience and faith in Your provision inspire us.

We pray for continued strength for those who face hunger and hardship. May the seeds of hope that are being sown through the CROP Hunger Walk bring forth a harvest of abundance, peace and stability. Help us to be good stewards of our earth’s resources by being Your hands and feet in the world, using the gifts You’ve entrusted to us to feed the hungry, uplift the vulnerable and empower those in need.

Amen.





## YOU CAN START A RIPPLE EFFECT

(For this children's sermon you'll need a tub or bucket of water and some small stones.)

Today we're going to do a science experiment to show how small actions can have a big impact. Have you ever thrown a rock into a lake? What happens to the water when the rock hits it?

Let's try something similar with a tub of water and small stones. (Instruct the kids to take turns dropping stones in the water and watching each time how the water reacts. Encourage their observations and comments.)

This demonstrates the ripple effect—how one small action creates another, just like the rings formed when a stone hits water.

The ripple effect doesn't only happen in water. It happens in our relationships and actions. In the Bible, there's a story about a crowd of 5,000 people who gathered to see Jesus. When they became hungry, Jesus asked His disciples to find food. They were surprised and said they didn't have enough money to buy bread for everyone. Then, a young boy stepped forward with two fish and five loaves of bread, offering what little he had. Jesus took the boy's gift, blessed it and began sharing it with the crowd. Then something amazing happened! The food multiplied, and there was enough to feed everyone—with leftovers. This story shows how one small act of generosity can create a ripple effect, blessing many others.

This month, we can start a ripple effect in our community and around the world through the CROP Hunger Walk. When we raise funds and walk miles, we help feed the hungry—just like the boy in the story, whose small gift had a big impact. For example, if your Sunday school class raises just \$21 for the CROP Hunger Walk, it can buy five chickens for a family in Tanzania, a country in Africa.

That gift has a big impact as the chickens grow. It provides eggs, meat and extra money to help the family buy things like a house, clothes or send kids to school. It can even help their neighbors start a farm or business.

Our actions of love and kindness can have ripple effects that help people around the world and right here where we live, by providing food, voice and a safe place to call home.

## LET'S PRAY:

Loving God, thank you for the food and water that we enjoy each day that help our bodies grow. We pray for anyone in the world who may not have enough good food to eat. Help us to share what we have with others so that they can work and play and grow strong, too. With your help, we can have a ripple effect that changes lives. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.



To learn more about this  
African community, visit the  
Story of Change here!



# *Responsive* READING PRAYER

**ONE:** *God calls us to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly*

**ALL:** As we prepare for our CROP Hunger Walk, open our hearts by helping us be a source of hope and light to our siblings who long for justice.

**ONE:** *In a world where one in 11 people face hunger ...*

**ALL:** Help us to share our gifts to create sustainable solutions to hunger and poverty so that families can thrive today and in the future, providing enough for all.

**ONE:** *Where one in three people globally lack access to clean water ...*

**ALL:** Remind us of the many ways You have used water to restore, renew and deliver Your people to safety. May we do the same for our neighbors

**ONE:** *When natural disaster strikes ...*

**ALL:** Help us meet urgent needs and comfort our neighbors by providing emergency supplies and supporting long-term recovery efforts.

**ONE:** *When 110 million people are displaced from their homes due to war, persecution or natural disasters ...*

**ALL:** Move our hearts to welcome the stranger, believing that everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

**ONE:** *The suffering in our world can feel overwhelming and sometimes leave us feeling powerless.*

**ALL:** When we work together to share our gifts and resources, we compassionately show hope by transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, disaster and displacement; helping all people achieve their big dreams. Amen!





Loving Creator: As we prepare for our CROP Hunger Walk, help us remember those who are experiencing hunger, poverty, disaster or displacement. Inspire us to do all we can as hunger fighters – to share our resources, to advocate for better climate policies and to show love and mercy for all.

We are grateful for the knowledge that helps farmers adapt to climate change and produce a more bountiful harvest. We are grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside communities with the tools, resources and training they need to provide for their families and communities.

Amen.

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God, thank You that we get to help people through the CROP Hunger Walk. We get to help people chicken farm so that they have good food and a better life. Thank you for Julius and his village that works hard to love each other, no matter what. They help teach us that we all have gifts to share. We can do more when we work together. Help us work together with our friends near and far so that we can all make this world a better place for all.

Amen.

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Loving Creator: We are grateful for the lives changed through these programs, helping families improve their diets, overall health and their livelihoods. Thank you for people like Matumaini, who graciously share their knowledge with others and empower women in their communities to have gender equality and economic security. May we remember Matumaini and her community as we walk in the CROP Walk and be inspired by her example so that others may share in Your bounty and Your love.

Amen.

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Gracious God: We thank You for the gift of community and the power of shared compassion. We lift up the people of Kitui, Kenya, and especially Mama Nguyo, whose resilience and faith in Your provision inspire us.

We pray for continued strength for those who face hunger and hardship. May the seeds of hope that are being sown through the CROP Walk bring forth a harvest of abundance, peace and stability. Help us to be good stewards of our earth's resources by being Your hands and feet in the world, using the gifts You've entrusted to us to feed the hungry, uplift the vulnerable and empower those in need.

Amen.

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Gracious God: We gather today with hearts full of gratitude for the abundance we enjoy and with a deep sense of responsibility to those who struggle for daily bread, shelter and peace. We lift up to you those who hunger for food, those who long for a safe place to call home and those whose voices go unheard.

May we be reminded of our shared call to serve, to heal and to offer hope. Guide our actions and our efforts in working toward a world where everyone has enough, where all are welcomed and valued and where justice flows like a mighty river.

Bless the many hands that bring comfort and empowerment to the displaced, the hungry and the overlooked. May we be Your hands and feet, embodying your love in every act of kindness and every stride we take.

In Your holy name we pray,

Amen.