It’s often not “simple” to live and work for simplicity and sustainability in our lives. This is especially true during the holiday season when consumerism is working overtime. Making suggestions for change, while respecting holiday traditions, is one of the balancing acts we face when as Christians we strive to celebrate outside distorted, materialistic views of Christmas. Here are ideas and resources on how we might do this through the gifts we give, the time we share, and our preparation for the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Be creative with your gifts:
- Design and create a calendar using cut-out pictures, photos, drawings, and/or quotations.
- Make an ELCA Hunger or Lutheran World Relief contribution in honor of a recipient.
- Compile songs into a flash drive. Under each title, explain why you chose it for the recipient.
- Compile a list of memories and arrange them in a creative fashion; add illustrations if you want.
- Buy a used book and in the inside cover explain why you chose the book for that person.
- Make an audio or video interview with an elderly relative or friend about childhood memories, how they met their spouse, etc.; give to siblings, children.
- Bake your favorite holiday treat or homemade goodie and pack in a recycled tin.
- Collect quotes or recipes for the recipient.

Offer the gift of your time:
- Treat an older relative or friend to a monthly lunch date.
- Write and deliver a poem or story; or create a visual for a Bible verse that the recipient likes.
- Volunteer together at a meal program, food bank, soup kitchen, or shelter.
- Share a culinary, computer or other skill.
- Set household spending limits and choose a peace and justice group to support as a gift.
For discussion and reflection

We are called to celebrate all life, including our own, not to repress it. But to celebrate life does not involve participation in the luxury and waste of a throwaway society that exists in the midst of world poverty. **John Cobb**

Simplicity can be difficult, but the alternative is immensely more difficult. **Richard Foster**

If you realize you have enough, you are truly rich. **Lao Tzu**

The human community and the natural world will go into the future together as a single, sacred community or we will both perish in the desert. **Thomas Berry**

We read the Gospel as if we had no money, and we spend our money as if we know not thing of the Gospel. **John Haughey**

The more we have, the less we own. **Meister Eckhart**

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed. **Proverbs 19:17 ESV**

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again. -- **Mohandas Gandhi**

This we know: the Earth does not belong to the people; the people belong to the Earth. All things are connected. We are brothers and sisters after all. **Native American Wisdom**

Justice is sorting out what belongs to whom and returning it to them. **Walter Brueggemann**

i thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is Yes **e.e. Cummings**

Teach us to delight in simple things **Kipling**

From Scripture...

_Do Not Worry_, Matthew 6:25-34

_The Rich Young Man_, Matthew 19:16-26


Deut. 24:14-15, Matthew, 6:20, John 6:12

Acts 4: 32-35, 1 Timothy 6:6-10...

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Worship Resources:

_A Call to Peace_, Jim McGinnis. 52 meditations with helpful resource lists: www.ipj-ppj.org

_Guide My Feet_, ed. by Marian Wright Edelman, prayers and reflections (Beacon)

_leader Resources_: LPF Peace Points: Hosting a Hunger Awareness Meal

Tips for group use

Opening prayer, song, and/or text, e.g. _The Magnificat, Luke 1, or WOV_ (5 min.)

What is Christmas in our family? (10 min.)

Divide up the quotes and Bible texts and discuss in small groups. (15 min.)

Return and share ideas. Then brainstorm alternatives, leaders occasionally adding an idea from page one. (20 min.)

Close with an Advent song, prayer. (5 min.)

Have LPF Intro and Issue resources available for sharing.

LPF’s **Peace Points** resources include:

- _What Is Christian Peacemaking?_ • _Conflict Education_ • _Peace Worship_ • _Just War_ • _Hunger Awareness_... Available free by mail and at: www.LutheranPeace.org

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