

POVERTY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF HALDIMAND NORFOLK

CLERGY PACKAGE

POVERTY ERADICATION SUNDAY

OCTOBER 15, 2017

COMPILED BY

THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

PAPHN

SEPTEMBER 2017



Dear Clergy;

The Poverty Action Partnership of Haldimand-Norfolk (PAPHN) exists to find solutions to poverty by raising awareness, reducing stigma, mobilizing and strengthening our community to take action. We believe that by working together, we will obtain our vision of a caring, compassionate community free of poverty. The partnership also agrees that it is essential to listen to the voices of all people to understand poverty, that poverty negatively impacts everyone, that everyone is responsible for a poverty-free Haldimand and Norfolk and that above all else, poverty is a violation of basic human rights.

In September 2015, world leaders adopted the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The first of these goals, entitled No Poverty, recognizes that **all** countries must make efforts to end **all** forms of poverty. In their report, No Poverty: Why it Matters, the UN reported that, “right now there are 30 million children growing up poor in the world’s richest countries.” It is imperative that we act on these issues.

**“Answering the Call of October 17 to end poverty: A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies” is the theme for 2017. As well,** this year marks the 25th Anniversary of the declaration by the General Assembly that October 17 be known as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. As such, PAPHN has developed a package for clergy that we hope you will be able to share with your parishioners on **Sunday October 15, 2017**. We are hoping to raise the profile of poverty and poverty related issues that can often be hidden in our smaller, rural towns. The package contains ideas and examples of scriptures, hymns and prayers that relate to poverty. We have also included some stories of people with lived experience as well as some poverty related statistics. Finally, we have included some links to stories and activities directed towards children and youth.

As people of faith, we care about all who suffer, but we cannot separate our work to end poverty from the rest of our gospel ministry.  We must be clear that Christ’s great Love for us is Love for all of his children.  That Love must be the foundation of our own actions as we present their needs and our opportunities to the people in your congregations.  While Poverty Eradication Sunday is a one day event, the eradication of poverty in our communities is an ongoing concern that we need to address.We hope that you will find our package beneficial in helping to shine a light on the issues of poverty.

Thank you

Carrie Sinkowski

Chair, PAPHN

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SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS

# Matthew 25:35-40 (NRSV)

***35****for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,****36****I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’****37****Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?****38****And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?****39****And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’****40****And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25%3A35-40&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24046a)*] you did it to me.’*

**Mark 12: 41 – 44 (NRSV)**

# 41*He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”*

# Luke 6:20-21 (NRSV)

***20****Then [Jesus] looked up at his disciples and said:*

*“Blessed are you who are poor,  
    for yours is the kingdom of God.****21****“Blessed are you who are hungry now,  
    for you will be filled.  
“Blessed are you who weep now,  
    for you will laugh.”*

**Luke 21: 1 – 4 (NRSV)**

*He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury;****2****he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.****3****He said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them;****4****for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”*

# 1 John 3:17 (NRSV)

***17****How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?*

# Deuteronomy 15:7-8 (NRSV)

***7****If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor.****8****You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be*.

**Jeremiah 22:3 (NRSV)**

***3****Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.*

# Proverbs 31:8-9 (NRSV)

***8****Speak out for those who cannot speak,  
    for the rights of all the destitute.[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+31%3A8-9&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-17293a)*]****9****Speak out, judge righteously,  
    defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

# Psalm 113:5-8 (NRSV)

***5****Who is like the Lord our God,  
    who is seated on high,****6****who looks far down  
    on the heavens and the earth?****7****He raises the poor from the dust,  
    and lifts the needy from the ash heap,****8****to make them sit with princes,  
    with the princes of his people.*

**Psalm 146:5-9 (NRSV)**

***5****Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
    whose hope is in the Lord their God,****6****who made heaven and earth,  
    the sea, and all that is in them;  
who keeps faith forever;****7****who executes justice for the oppressed;  
    who gives food to the hungry.*

*The Lord sets the prisoners free;****8****the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.  
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;  
    the Lord loves the righteous.****9****The Lord watches over the strangers;  
    he upholds the orphan and the widow,  
    but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.*

# Isaiah 58:6-11 (NRSV)

***6****Is not this the fast that I choose:  
    to loose the bonds of injustice,  
    to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
    and to break every yoke?****7****Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
    and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
    and not to hide yourself from your own kin?****8****Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
    and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+58%3A6-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-18795a)*] shall go before you,  
    the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.****9****Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;  
    you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.*

*If you remove the yoke from among you,  
    the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,****10****if you offer your food to the hungry  
    and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
    and your gloom be like the noonday.****11****The Lord will guide you continually,  
    and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
    and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
    like a spring of water,  
    whose waters never fail.*

SUGGESTED PRAYERS

Creator God, we thank You for the universe, for our great home and for the many blessings and riches You provide. We thank you that Your Glory touches us in the light we see, in the fruitfulness of the earth, and in the joy of its creatures. We pray for the people in regions where there is conflict and social unrest. We pray for the people in countries where there are widespread famine and poverty. Inspire them all with the hope that will inspire them to seek to know your presence and your will. We pray for the leaders of the world, that they will learn to respond to hatred with love, to anger with kindness, to violence with peace. Lord, fill us with your peace, that we may share it, and by our example, may peace fill the whole world. AMEN

Heavenly Father, we pray that you will guide us and strengthen us, to keep us steadfast and resourceful in facing the challenges before us. We pray that you will grant us **Compassion** for those who are disrupted and displaced, the **Wisdom** to assess danger, and the **Persistence** to make changes that will benefit those who do not have adequate food, who live without shelter, who lack respect and opportunity, and for whom there is no economic or personal security. Give us, we pray, generosity in funds, where that is possible, and strength in spirit because that is always possible. Open our hearts to the misery of hunger, open our minds to the rigors of analysis, and fortify us with the vision you have shared with us. We pray for the leaders of the world, that they will have the courage to respond to hatred with love, to anger with kindness, to violence with peace. Lord, fill us with your peace, and move us to care for one another, as you care for us. AMEN.

**Creator God, You loved the world into life.** Forgive us when our dreams of the future are shaped by anything other than glimpses of a kingdom of justice, peace and an end to poverty.

**Incarnate God, you taught us to speak out for what is right.** Make us content with nothing less than a world that is transformed into the shape of love, where poverty shall be no more.

**Breath of God, let there be abundant life.** Inspire us with the vision of poverty over, and give us the faith, courage and will to make it happen. AMEN

**God of the impossible,** we pray for justice, peace and reconciliation. And when the challenges seem too many, remind us of your resurrection power, and the miracles of your love that happen whenever injustice is dismantled and rebuilt with peace.  
Help us to hope that the impossible can happen and live as if it might do so today.  
AMEN

**God of reconciliation and grace,** you promise us a world where all is new, where love is born when hope is gone, where broken relationships are restored to wholeness. May we live as people who know your story of love; And may we have the vision to imagine what could be possible if we dared to live this story. God of abundant life may we be witnesses of love, hope and peace, and co-creators of your life in the world. AMEN

**Loving God, you make us in your image.** Forgive us when we fail to see your image in each other, when we give in to greed and indifference and when we do not question the systems that are life-denying. We are made in your image, let us live in your image and be Christ-like  
in service, endurance and love. AMEN

**Gracious and Loving God,** we have heard the concerns of people who live in poverty and their cries for help.  We see more clearly their struggles in their daily lives.  We pray that You will spur us into helping these your children, using the talents and gifts with which you have blessed us.  Lord, we know that meeting their earthly needs is only the beginning.  Help us to open for them the door that leads to their eternal and spiritual needs, and to their salvation and eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.  We pray this in His Name.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Blessed are They, the Poor in Spirit

All Poor Ones and Humble

When a Poor One

Hail to God’s Own Anointed

Just As I Am

Jesus Christ is Waiting

Homeless People

All Praise to Thee

Homeless People, Will You Listen

Make Me A Servant

Oh God, You Gave Your Servant John

God of Freedom, God of Justice

O for a World

Sister Let me Be your Servant

LIVED EXPERIENCE STORIES FOR USE IN SERMON PREPARATION

Story #1:

A young man, 29 years of age, has struggled all of his life in poverty. He was a child who lived in poverty. He had some learning problems and struggled with making friends and also achieving at school. He started to receive Ontario Disability Pension in his early 20’s. (On ODSP, a single person receives $1110/month and couples, where both people are disabled receive $2012/mos.) After rent and utilities, little is left over for food, medications or entertainment. He has pride and wishes that he had a wage that he could live on.

Most days he is hungry. He goes to the food bank as often as permitted and will take handouts from family and friends. He attends a couple of community dinners each month so that he does not go hungry. He says it is embarrassing to go to food banks and dinners and ask for handouts. He feels he has no other choice.

Did you know that someone who lives in poverty is more likely to suffer negative health effects? This man has many health problems linked to his poverty- diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, mental health issues including being bi-polar and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and asthma. To complicate his life, he was unable to obtain a local family doctor and must travel out of the county to see his physician.

Many people living in poverty do not have the resources to go to the doctor, as most cannot afford a car and the gas. Most depend on others to drive them. With few friends and family that have cars, means missed appointments.

He lives with his wife in a home that has been converted into 4 apartments. He has to walk up many flights of stairs. Has no laundry facilities near-by and has arguments with his landlord. One of these arguments occurred when he smelled gas in the apartment and called 911, which is the correct thing to do. His landlord says he should have just called him. The landlord does not maintain the building or replace batteries in the smoke detectors. He is afraid to cause too many problems in fear of being evicted.

His problems include the following/

* + Financial insecurity
  + Food insecurity
  + Poor Health & Access to health care
  + Transportation
  + Affordable and safe housing

How has the faith community and community at large helped this young man?

• Able to go to a food bank, this is a short term solution, but it helps at the time

• Attends community meals, mostly hosted by churches

• While at the dinners feels included and valued

• Has a family doctor who he sees regularly

• Receives transportation through Senior Support Services

• Can access health care at emergency, if unable to get to his family doctor

• Able to get clothes through the Salvation Army at a lower cost, or goes to the Community Closet and obtains clothes for free

Story #2:

A man in his late to mid-fifties finds himself without a job after the business closed down. He is currently on Ontario Works (welfare) until he can find work. As a single person on Ontario Works he receives $681/mos. Most apartments are $600.00 plus utilities, so there is no money for food. For 6 months this man was homeless and lived out of his car. He seldom shares that story with others as he is embarrassed and ashamed of his situation. He wishes he could find a job and get back to living again.

While living out of his car, he had extra money for food. When short, he would go to the food bank or the pay it forward restaurant in town for something to eat. Most days he does not have breakfast and is often hungry. He goes to the food bank as often as permitted. He says it is embarrassing to have to go the food bank.

This man has not always lived in poverty. However, the strain on him financially and stress have been very difficult. He was becoming depressed and thought that the future held nothing for him. He is fortunate that he has a local doctor.

Unfortunately, his car is no longer working - a major transmission problem - and he does not have the funds to fix it. He lives in the country and walks 1.5 hours to get into town for appointments and meetings. He has very few friends, none of them have a car and he has no family. He has recently had a bicycle donated to him, so he hopes that he will be able to get around better. He worries about transportation once the winter and snow arrive.

He would like to live in town, but there are no apartments that he can afford.

His problems include the following.

* Financial insecurity
* Food insecurity
* Transportation
* Safe & Affordable housing

How has the faith community and community at large helped this man?

• Able to go to a food bank, this is a short term solution, but it helps at the time

• OW will assist with transportation for medical appointments

• He is doing an online course/training with the support of St Leonard’s and Haldimand- Norfolk Literacy council in hopes of improving skills to obtain employment

• Has a family doctor who he sees regularly

• Able to get clothes through the Salvation Army at a lower cost, or goes to the Community Closet and obtains clothes for free

• His hobby is photography and he is often invited by individuals and agencies to take photographs during events. This makes him feel very included in the community

Story #3

My name is Tom and I am 57yrs old. My story begins with a pretty “normal” childhood. I had a mom and dad and 3 siblings and I was surrounded by love and caring. I did well in school and excelled in sports. In high school, I was involved in a chef training program and this became a passion of mine. I was the first member of my family to graduate high school with a Grade 12 diploma.

I then entered into the “real” world. I was in the Army Cadets for 6 years and also held a part time job with the parks board. After this, I worked as a chef in restaurants and catering businesses and also spent some time working in various factories. I worked full time until 2010 when my life changed.

In 2010, I was jumped from behind, thrown head first into a concrete wall and lost consciousness. Around this time I started suffering with what I called “attacks”. Today the attacks have been diagnosed as seizures. The attacks could be large, where I would shake uncontrollably, pass out and many times end up in hospital or they could be small, where I would feel dizzy, lose my speech and memory. As a result of my condition, my world fell apart. Because the attacks came without warning and were uncontrolled, I became a risk to have in the kitchen or on the assembly line and as a result, I was out of work. I had no income coming in and was forced to turn to Ontario Works.

I became caught in a vicious cycle. I was on Ontario Works and had just enough money to afford a little bit of food and rent in a small room in a run down, local hotel. I had lost my identification and had no money to replace it. Without this identification I could not apply for a health card. I was suffering with undiagnosed “attacks” and had no family doctor and without a valid health card, I could not apply for a doctor. To make things worse, my parents were dead and I had lost touch with my remaining family. I had absolutely no support and I had lost interest in life. I thought I would remain in the cycle forever.

Then an Ontario Works case manager helped me get my birth certificate. She linked me with a support person who helped me to get a health card and find a doctor. My doctor sent me to specialists who are working with me to this day to manage my seizures. The doctors and support worker were able to assist me in applying for and receiving support from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Finally, I became housed at Indwell which is a “Christian Charity that creates affordable housing communities that support people seeking health, wellness and belonging.” Since receiving ODSP and living at Indwell, I have not only become able to afford my rent and purchase nutritious food but I can afford to purchase things such as clothing, shoes and toiletries. I have become very involved in Hambleton Hall activities in an effort to give back. I work in the kitchen helping to prepare the special meals that Indwell hosts for its residents and I also work in the community garden. I take great pride in my work and once again I have some quality in my life.

His problems included the following:

* Financial insecurity
* Poor health and lack of access to healthcare
* Safe and Affordable Housing
* Lack of Social Inclusion

How has the faith community and the community at large helped this man?

* OW assisted him with obtaining his identification, transportation and a support worker
* Assistance in finding family doctor and filling out paperwork for ODSP and housing
* Has a family doctor and specialist he sees regularly
* Christian charity with community/faith support provided him housing
* Giving back to his community through community garden and assisting in activities at Hambleton Hall has given him a sense of purpose and belonging

WHAT CAN WE DO AS A CONGREGATION OR AN INDIVIDUAL TO HELP PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY?

• Become involved in your community

• Strive to make your community friendly and inclusive

• Make your church inclusive so all who attend feel included

• Get to know your neighbour

• Recognize and support those who are struggling

• Join a board or community group

• Express your concerns to various levels of government

• Try not to judge, re frame your thinking

• Educate other on factors that influence health

• Avoid blaming and focusing on individual lifestyle choices, they are not choices

• Learn more about health equity by visiting websites

• Support local initiatives that lift people out of poverty

• Know what community resources are available to address the economic and social needs

• Encourage your politicians

* Be aware of the local issues as they relate to poverty
* Support housing first strategy
* Support food security
* Promote health in all policies
* Support & approve policies

• Encourage businesses to pay a living wage and offer benefits

• Realizing that students who come to school hungry and without having enough sleep are not ready to learn- support breakfast/snack programs

• Help build a healthy and productive next generation

• Support a Pay It Forward program in your community

POVERTY STATISTICS

* 1 in 7 people in Canada live in poverty
* 1 in 5 children in Canada live in poverty
* 1 in 8 households are food insecure
* 1 in 10 cannot afford to fill their prescriptions
* Youth 16-24 make up 20% of the homeless population
* 45% of the overall homeless population are living with a mental health diagnosis or disability

(Source: Canada Without Poverty, 2017)

As of December 31, 2016, there were just over 300 applications on the Haldimand Norfolk Centralized Waiting List for Rent Geared to Income Housing. Of these people on the waiting list, approximately 30% are seniors (age 65+) and 13% are considered special priority applicants meaning they have been victims of domestic violence. Average wait times for adult applicants requiring bachelor/1 bedroom units is 7-8 years or more. (Source: Social Housing Year End Report H>S> 17-01)

It is important to remember that homelessness looks different in Haldimand and Norfolk than it does in a big city like Toronto. We don’t tend to see people sleeping on the street corners in our towns but that doesn’t mean that homelessness doesn’t exist. In our area we see people “rough sleeping” which means they sleep on our trails, in our parks after dark and under bridges. We also see people living in their cars and year round in campers or tents. Finally, we have homeless people who “couch surf”. Couch surfing happens when a person or a family move from home to home spending a few nights or weeks in someone’s home before moving on to another home.

**What can you do to help?** In spring 2018, HN Housing Services will need to count the number of homeless people in our counties. If you or your church is interested in volunteering, please call Tricia Givens, Supervisor, Housing services at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623, ext. 3748.

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

These are suggestions from our search for relevant programs on the internet. There are others and we know that Sunday School leaders will have their own ideas about how to provide their particular groups with a meaningful lesson that represents their own faith community’s needs.

1. Jesus and the Widow’s Offering (Mark 12: 41 – 44; Luke 21:1-4): <https://bible.org/seriespage/8-jesus-and-widow-s-offering-mark-1241-44-luke-211-4>

2. Jesus and the Widow’s Offering (Mark 12: 41 – 44; Luke 21:1-4): Biblelessons4Kidz.com

# 3. “Heart of Giving” Sunday School Lesson (Mark 10:17-27) Stewardship for Kids. Ministry to Children <https://ministry-to-children.com/heart-of-giving-lesson/>

# 4. Preschool Bible Lesson: The Widow’s Offering Ministry to Children. <https://ministry-to-children.com/widows-offering-preschool-lesson/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Chew on This Campaign [ https://dignityforall.ca/]

**Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-Free Canada** was founded by [Canada Without Poverty](http://www.cwp-csp.ca/) and [Citizens for Public Justice](https://cpj.ca/) in 2009. Dignity for All is a multi-year, multi-partner, non-partisan **campaign** with a vision to create a **poverty**-free society. On October 17, Dignity for All marks the International Day for the **Eradication** of **Poverty**. This year will be the 5th anniversary of ChewOnThis!, where people across the country take to the streets to engage their communities about how the federal government can step up to help the 1 in 8 households in Canada that struggle to put food on the table by calling for a rights-based national anti-poverty plan as part of the [ChewOnThis!](http://cwp-csp.us6.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=389075e355b60ea9c8d3e4044&id=c4e8e16e42&e=4aa10d660d) campaign.

[2](http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/ending-poverty2). Check out what the United Church of Canada is doing

http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/ending-poverty