

Food is important to people of faith. It is a gift of God and central to human nurture and health, as well as essential to all life on earth.

As Christians we are called to pursue all that makes for wholeness and work for the common good. So we need to take these challenges seriously without becoming overwhelmed.

What can we do in our local Christian communities that can make a positive difference for the most vulnerable in our society and for all our futures?

O God,  
to those who have hunger, give bread,  
and to us who have bread,  
give the hunger for justice.

## Food for thought

**All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger and Food Poverty** [www.foodpovertyinquiry.org/](http://www.foodpovertyinquiry.org/)

**Feeding Devon's Future** (Devon Strategic Partnership) [www.new.devon.gov.uk/devonsp/devon-food-strategy](http://www.new.devon.gov.uk/devonsp/devon-food-strategy)

**Church action on poverty** Walking the Breadline (Churches and OXFAM) [www.church-poverty.org.uk/walkingthebreadline](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/walkingthebreadline)

**Faith in Foodbanks** A resource including case studies, Bible reflections, worship materials and simple actions for churches, from Church Action on Poverty and the Church Public Issues Team. [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/faithinfoodbanks](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/faithinfoodbanks)

**Quantities for catering** Exeter Diocese has lots more detail in LEAF Procurement Policy and lots of recipe ideas using Fair and Local ingredients. [www.exeter.anglican.org/YourChurch/FairandLocal](http://www.exeter.anglican.org/YourChurch/FairandLocal)

**Find a local Farm Shop or Farmers Market** [www.localfoods.org.uk](http://www.localfoods.org.uk) [www.digforvictory.com](http://www.digforvictory.com) [www.thebiglunch.com](http://www.thebiglunch.com)

**British Food Fortnight** [www.lovebritishfood.co.uk](http://www.lovebritishfood.co.uk)

**Fairtrade supplies** [www.traidcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk) 0845 330 8900.

**Good Food for Everyone Forever** A People's Takeover of the World's Food Supply by Colin Tudge. Paperback, Pari Publishing £9.85 ISBN-13: 978-8895604138

For further information or more copies please contact Church and Society Diocese of Exeter, The Old Deanery, Exeter, Devon EX1 1HS T 01392 294940 [www.exeter.anglican.org](http://www.exeter.anglican.org)

Produced by Church and Society, Exeter Diocese, working ecumenically for the people of Devon, including Plymouth and Torbay.

**DIOCESE OF EXETER**  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN DEVON

# FOOD to FEED and FLOURISH



Farming, fishing and flourishing have historically contributed greatly to the well-being of Devon, where land and sea have provided a rich resource for human activity and industry.

The sharing of food has traditionally created community life and prompted cultural customs. Family meals strengthen relationships and food celebrations bring people together. Yet these are now in danger of being eroded and many of our deeper connections to food are disappearing.

How can Christian communities help put food back where it belongs so that all in our community can flourish?

# How can we make sure food helps our communities flourish?

Today, we struggle with a number of food issues and challenges at a time of both plenty and poverty. Even in an affluent county like Devon, people go hungry and others face poor nutrition and diet-related illness. Diet-related life expectancy can vary as much as 14 years across Devon.

Over 20,000 people in Devon are at the highest risk of food poverty because of rising costs and low income. Church volunteers have supported 25 Foodbanks in Devon in recent years, feeding as many as 400 people a week.

The Devon and Cornwall Food Association has redistributed over 130 tonnes of food in Plymouth and Exeter areas.

Across the UK we are losing land that provides us with produce. Weather chaos is devastating crops. Pollution is destroying species. The diversity of fruit and vegetables is declining as thousands of varieties have been lost in the last century.

The complexity of global supply lines and conflict already affects our food supplies, and there is much speculation on how long oil-based energy, required for agriculture and food-processing, will last.

So healthy food has become expensive for many, while processed food is cheaper and more easily available. In the UK today a third of under 18 year olds are obese due poor diet. Almost half the total amount of food thrown away in the UK comes not from supermarkets but from our homes: we throw away 7 million tonnes of food and drink from our homes every year.

## What can we do? Here's a banquet of ideas...

### Audit your food supplies and waste.

For a week, design a chart for your kitchen and record what you buy, when and from where, and write a list of food waste you throw away. See if you identify patterns that you can address.



### Give thanks

We often read of Christ giving thanks at the start of a meal, usually an opportunity for friendship and fellowship. Practice a moment of gratitude for the people who have grown your ingredients, taken part in the production of your meal, and if you have someone to share it with, give thanks for them.

### Choose Fairtrade

This supports the farmers that grow many staples for our kitchen that are hard to grow in our climate, such as coffee, tea, rice, dried fruit and nuts. Only a just and fair food supply line is going to be sustainable in the future. Learn more during Fairtrade Fortnight usually end of February and beginning of March.

### Choose local

seasonal veg and fruit  
Get to know your local grocer, farmer's markets and farm shops and build a visit into your weekly or monthly routines. Could you organise lifts for one another?

### Share local produce

Can you join in a local allotment scheme, food co-operative, food community where local produce is shared? Or could you help organise one in your community? Consider how the Church uses local land. How could this be made available for local food production?

### Cook

Encourage an interest in cooking and good nutrition. Do local schools, foodbanks, homeless projects, run cookery classes you could support?



### British Food Fortnight

Celebrate local food suppliers as well as harvests in this fortnight which usually spans the end of September and the beginning of October.

### Harvest

Use Harvest festivals and suppers to celebrate the provision of food. Invite local farmers and suppliers and Fairtrade sellers to a special event. Can refreshment volunteers explore together about using Fair and Local ingredients in the Harvest meal.



### Have lunch together

The Big Lunch is a simple idea from the Eden Project. Have lunch with your neighbours annually on the first Sunday in June in a simple act of community, friendship and fun.