

## January: National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

According to the International Labour Organization ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)) 49.6 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021. 27.6 million were in forced labor and 6.3 million were in forced commercial sexual exploitation. Hunger is one of the leading causes of human trafficking. Hungry families sell their children into prostitution in order to put food on the table and pay for housing. UNICEF ([unicefusa.org](http://unicefusa.org)) reports that food insecure teens accept exploitative scams in order to secure food and other necessities.

Consumers contribute to modern slavery and forced labor by purchasing inexpensive goods made in factories where workers are victims of forced labor and inhumane living conditions. Hungry families allow their children to work in unhealthy and dangerous situations.

**Prayer:** Loving and generous God, forgive us for unknowingly participating in the root causes of modern slavery and human trafficking. Grant us a generous spirit and willingness to help those who experience food insecurity and hunger. Give us the courage to speak up for the rights of those less fortunate than us. Gather together your scattered people; set free those who are slaves among the nations; look on those who are rejected and despised; and let the nations know that you are our God.. Amen.

### Take action:

1. Find out how your purchasing power influences human trafficking and modern slavery. Take a quiz to find out your slavery footprint and learn more at: [slaveryfootprint.org](http://slaveryfootprint.org).
2. Look for fair-trade certification on products that you purchase. Learn about how to purchase ethically made products at: <https://humaneeducation.org/10-tools-help-find-ethical-products/>

### Additional Ways to Address Hunger

Attend **A Day for All People** in Richmond on January 18<sup>th</sup>. It is an advocacy day sponsored by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) and Virginia Interfaith Power and Light (VAIPL). This is a day full of workshops and networking to learn how to advocate for those unable to advocate for themselves. The Virginia Synod of the ELCA participates in this activity.



January 19th is **National Tin Can Day**. How about taking up a collection of canned goods for your local food pantry and presenting it to them on this day.