

ETF Revisions and Resources

During the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, while most of Life Around the Table's programming was paused or in various stages of adaptation, we had space to imagine how we could build upon, or revise, the ETF Framework. We wanted it to reflect what we had learned from facilitator feedback, our own continuing education about the food system, and from watching the multiple crises unfolding in our world. Specifically, we wanted to pare down the content of each conversation so that participants weren't overwhelmed by the amount of information they felt like they needed to cover. We also needed to expand the voices included in the original framework to reflect the diversity of those actually working for food sovereignty and justice. These continue to be important considerations as you use this resource: How much information can your group work through without burning out? How are you centering BIPOC lives, work, and voices in learning about our food system and efforts for food justice?

While we never published a second edition of *Eating Together Faithfully*, we do have a number of collected resources and questions that still might be of use to your group. Consider what follows as a resource for continued learning, or perhaps you'd like to substitute an article or scripture passage in the ETF Framework for one here. Feel free to utilize these rough outlines in whatever ways make sense for your context.

Additionally, we have included resources and discussion posts from our online community (which no longer exists). These are even more collected articles, videos, websites for you to use with your group or keep learning on your own.

As always, peace,
The LATT Staff

Local/Incarnation

- **Simmering in the word**
 - Genesis 2:4-25
 - In this creation story, God creates the humans from the dirt of a particular place (Eden) where they are to "till and keep" the land. From what land would you say you are from and what land are you responsible for tilling and keeping?
 - John 1:1-14
 - God became incarnate in a specific person (Jesus) and yet all things have been created both by and through him. In what ways do you see the life and light of God where you live? How can we learn to recognize God in our midst?
- **Side Dishes**
 - **Search the Scriptures:**
 - Read pages 28-33 in Ellen Davis's *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). How does Davis's interpretation of humanity's relationship to the land impact the way you read Genesis 2:4-25?
 - Compare and contrast the two creation stories in Genesis along with John 1. What do these passages illuminate about creation?

- **Listen to More Voices**
 - Natasha Bowens, *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience, and Farming* (New Society Publishers, 2015), 86: Description of the relationship between Cherokee farmers and the National Park service.
- **Uncover the Facts**
 - Where was your food grown?
<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2016/03/15/national-ag-day-where-was-food-your-plate-grown>
 - How do you define local? Look at these definitions (certain mile radius, with-in certain borders, from particular traditions?) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these definitions?
 - Use [USDA Local Food Directory](#) and [Local Harvest](#) to locate sources of local food in your area.
- **Pay Attention to your Community**
 - Whose land are you on? <https://native-land.ca/> What concerns do these tribes have currently? Practice giving land acknowledgements. <https://usdac.us/nativeland> and <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>
- **Dessert**
 - What about where you live makes you most proud?

Affordable/Grace

- **Simmering in the word**
 - Isaiah 55:1-5
 - In this passage, restoration is imagined as the Lord calling everyone to delight in food and drink at no cost. In what ways does this passage reflect your understanding of God's grace or not? In what way does this passage reflect food justice or not?
 - Mark 6:30-44 (Feeding the 5000)
 - When the disciples anticipate the needs of the crowd to get food and are daunted by providing for so many on their own, Jesus multiplies what little food they have into an abundance. What does this miracle reveal about who Jesus is? What do you imagine such a meal meant for the people in the crowd?
- **Side Dishes**
 - **Uncover the Facts**
 - Feeding America has compiled hunger statistics for the US down to the county level. Look at their interactive map and look at the statistics for your county. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/> Share what you learn.
 - Look at this website from Bread for the World about how Covid-19 has impacted food access: <https://www.bread.org/hunger-and-coronavirus> How have you seen the impacts of the pandemic impact food access in your community?
 - Take a look at Leanne Brown's cookbook, *Good and Cheap* (<https://www.leannebrown.com/cookbooks/>) It's available for free as a pdf

download in both Spanish and English. Do you think this is a helpful tool in addressing the needs of food access?

Uncomplicated/Ordinary Made Holy

- **Simmering in the word**
 - Exodus 16
 - In an extraordinary circumstance, God provides simple sustenance to the Israelites. What are the ways that you experience God's daily provision even in the ordinary? When has food, whether simple or lavish, been more than mere nutrition in your experience?
 - Luke 24
 - Jesus makes his resurrection known to his followers over a meal. What would it look like for the power of resurrection to be known by the ways our church eats together?
- **Side Dishes**
 - **Listen to More Voices**
 - Kaitlin B. Curtice, *Native: Identity, Belonging, and Rediscovering God* (Brazos Press: 2020), 85-87. Curtice describes what sharing her table with others means to her as an Indigenous woman in the church.
 - Leah Penniman, *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*, (Chelsea Green Publishing: 2018), 224-226. A call to reclaim traditional African diets to build health and ancestral connections across the African diaspora.
 - Vigen Guroian, *Inheriting Paradise: Meditations on Gardening*, (Eerdmans Publishing: 1999), 11-12. A striking story of the eucharistic bond between humanity and creation during the Armenian Genocide.
 - **Uncover the Facts**
 - Visit <https://foodrevolution.org/blog/indigenous-foods-systems-food-sovereignty/> to learn about Indigenous foods and ways that tribes across the Americas are undoing the impacts of colonization on their foodways to reclaim food sovereignty. Explore the many links and videos. Is any of this work happening where you live? What did you learn that was new or surprising?
 - **Pay Attention to your Community**
 - How and from where does your church get food?
 - Make a list of farmers/co-ops in your area. Are there programs in your area that will connect you to a local farmer of color? See [RAFI's Farm and Faith Partnership Program](#) as an example and download their Community Collaboration Guide!

Good/Justice

- **Simmering in the word**
 - 1 Kings 21
 - This passage tells a timeless story of the powerful taking land in deceitful and deadly ways. What do you think justice looks like in this story? What can this teach us about being in good relationship with each other and the land?
 - James 5:1-8
 - James derides the wealthy who live in luxury at the expense of laborers and harvesters. What do you think it means that God hears the cry of the

oppressed? He tells his audience to be patient like farmers in the midst of these injustices. How does this image reflect the way you think about justice or not?

- **Side Dishes**
 - **Listen to More Voices**
 - Natasha Bowens, *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience, and Farming* (New Society Publishers, 2015), 30-33. The story of how a family in California held onto their farm despite being sent to Japanese American internment camps during WWII.
 - **Uncover the Facts**
 - Learn about the Justice for Black Farmers Act here: <https://www.booker.senate.gov/news/press/booker-warren-gillibrand-smith-warnock-and-leahy-announce-comprehensive-bill-to-address-the-history-of-discrimination-in-federal-agricultural-policy> How can your community support farmers of color on both local and federal levels?
 - Do you know what a “food desert” is? The Center for Health Journalism has an introduction here that also covers some of the controversy with the term itself: <https://centerforhealthjournalism.org/resources/lessons/covering-food-deserts>
 - The Agrarian Trust has composed a toolkit specifically for faith communities wanting to understand a different (and more just) approach to land ownership. Their FaithLands program helps make tangible connections between faith communities, their neighbors, and the land they inhabit. Download (or purchase) the toolkit on their website and spend some time with it. What are three things that you can take away from the toolkit? <https://www.agrariantrust.org/initiatives/faithlands/toolkit/>

Healthy/Flourishing

- **Simmering in the word**
 - Joel 2:18-27
 - After a great calamity, God speaks of restoring the land, animals, and people all together. What does it mean for the land and the animals to not fear along with the people?
 - 1 Corinthians 12:12-26
 - Paul says that we are all one body, united in Christ. What does it mean to share in the suffering and honor of each other?
- **Side Dishes**
 - **Uncover the Facts**
 - In 2021, the CDC declared racism a serious health threat. Read the statement (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0408-racism-health.html>) and follow the link to the “Racism and Health” page. Do you see these kinds of health differences in your community?
 - How healthy is your community? Visit <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/> to see the health ranking statistics for your county across a number of measures from firearm death to food insecurity. Spend some time exploring the various health measures and see what aspects of health are most dire in your county.
 - **Pay Attention to your Community**

- Make a map of green spaces, markets, health services in your community. How do these work together to provide for the wholistic health of your area?

Season/Time and Liturgy

- **Simmering in the word**
 - Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
 - There is a season and time for every matter under heaven. What does it mean for us to be in rhythm with these seasons? How do you know when it's time for the season's change?
 - Galatians 6:1-10
 - Paul encourages his audience to persevere in doing what is right for we reap what we sow. What kind of harvest does our current food system sow?
- **Side Dishes**
 - **Uncover the Facts**
 - Spend some time with the Fourth National Climate Assessment (<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>). Under the "Chapters" tab at the top the of page you can explore various topics in detail. Take a look at National Topics like Ecosystems or Agriculture, your regional chapter, or any topic that catches your eye while thinking about how climate change will impact the ways we eat and grow food. What strikes you as most worrying? Where do you see chances for resiliency?
 - **Pay Attention to your Community**
 - Can you name what food is in season in your area? Make a list of food according to each season. Use <https://www.seasonalfoodguide.org/> to help.
 - The next time you are at the grocery store, pay attention to where the non-seasonal produce is from. Usually, the country of origin is printed on the small produce stickers on each item.

From our Online Platform

"Home Cooking" Podcast - September 28, 2020

Oftentimes eating more locally and seasonally, or buying more whole, unprocessed ingredients requires a little more know-how in the kitchen. It can be an exciting and welcomed challenge for some, but a real barrier for others. Either way, being more confident in the kitchen can be an important step towards participating in our food system differently and perhaps even in more creative, healthier, and more delicious ways.

Lately, the [Home Cooking podcast](#), hosted by Samin Nosrat and Hrishikesh Hirway, has been a real encouragement to me in the kitchen. They take questions from folks all over the world who are starting to cook more at home because of the pandemic. It is equal parts inspiration, cooking instruction, and puns. I've found myself grinning and giggling along as I make mental notes about what to make for dinner. They're also great about recording all their ideas and recipes links for each episode on [their website](#). If you're looking for some great cooking tips or even just a laugh, I highly recommend it!

Have you been making anything new in the kitchen since staying at home more?

"The Great Farm Box Boom"- May 21, 2020

As the pandemic has revealed weaknesses of our food system, it seems that there has been a greater interest in how to get local food.

This article from Serious Eats describes how more people have turned to CSAs or other farm delivery services and how some farmers have adapted to the new demand in the recent months: <https://www.serious eats.com/2020/05/csa-farm-box-demand-coronavirus-covid-sales.html>

(There's even a link to a website that can help you find a CSA subscription in your area if you don't know of any)

Have you seen more people turning to locally produced food in your area these days? What has your experience been with CSAs or farm shares?

On Higher Ground: Ministries of Food Sovereignty in African American Christian Traditions- November 12, 2020

We are really excited to be able to share this webinar recording from our [MTSO](#)-sponsored online training earlier this month. In the first half, Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III presents on some of the history of how food sovereignty has long been a part of African American religious traditions as well as how his community in Maryland is continuing that legacy with the [Black Church Food Security Network](#). Then, MTSO faculty and staff share some of their stories and what has brought them to pursue food justice as part of theological education.

Friends, if you are looking to learn more about what food sovereignty looks like or if you are in the need of some inspiration, this recording is for you!

You can access the recording here: <https://www.mtso.edu/theologicalcommons/archive-resources/on-higher-ground/>

This webinar would make a great supplemental resource for an ETF group, especially for those looking to learn more about how topics of food, race, and justice.

Identifying and Countering White Supremacy Culture in Food Systems- October 28, 2020

Last month, Duke's World Food Policy Center shared the research of Alison Conrad on how white supremacy culture plays itself out in our food systems. The research brief breaks down 8 different ways we can see white supremacy in the food system and how they feed into larger narratives in our society. It is a really helpful document full of clear definitions and even lists other resources to keep learning (and unlearning). You can access the PDF below.

[Whiteness-Food-Movements-Research-Brief-WFPC-October-2020.pdf](#)

Also, there is an accompanying podcast (just 15 mins!) that summarizes what is in the research brief. You can access it [here](#).

I could easily see this document or podcast being paired with Conversation 5 (Good/Justice) as a way to help us identify what racism looks like in our food systems.

Are you familiar with any of these 8 narratives? What resonates most strongly with you from Conrad's research?

"Decolonize Your Diet: Notes Towards Decolonization"- June 26, 2020

This week I want to share an article that was introduced to us through the Food Systems New England's [21 Day Challenge Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge](#). It's a piece that introduces the Native American Food movement and I have continued to think about it since February in terms of the legacies of the food I eat and what foods I consider "normal."

It is written by Catrióna Rueda Esquivel for [Food First](#), aka the Institute for Food and Development Policy, which works against the injustices that cause hunger. (They are a great resource for food systems information, by the way)

Here is the link to the article: <https://foodfirst.org/publication/decolonize-your-diet-notes-towards-decolonization/>

Did this article make you think differently about the food you eat? What new information stood out to you most?

A Brief History of Black Land Ownership in the US with Leah Penniman- June 18, 2020

In this short (25 min) podcast, Leah Penniman is interviewed by Tom Philpott, host of Bite: a podcast for people who think hard about their food. Leah Penniman is the author of *Farming While Black* (highly recommended) and founder of [Soul Fire Farm](#). Penniman talks about the roots of regenerative agriculture originating in Africa and gives an overview of Black land ownership in the US from "40 acres and a mule" until today. She also mentions the spiritual dimensions of working for food and land justice and some of the ways she and others are working towards reparations regarding land ownership.

Here is the link to the interview: <https://www.motherjones.com/topics/bite/>

What new information or ideas did you hear in this interview? What are you curious to know more about?

LaDonna Sanders-Redmond on "Food Deserts"- June 11, 2020

Here is an episode of "Food Talk with Dani Nierenberg" by [Food Tank](#), a think tank working for food systems change. Nierenberg interviews LaDonna Sanders-Redmond, director of SOUL Food Monologues, about how COVID-19 has revealed the weaknesses of our food system.

While Sanders-Redmond talks broadly about the challenges communities of color face in terms of employment, food access, and policing, I particularly want to direct your attention to the 25:30 minute mark. That is where Sanders-Redmond explains some of the beginnings of the term "food desert" and why, as someone who worked in the communities that were first described as such, she has always been against the use of the term.

This interview would make a great addition to the Good/Justice conversation in the ETF Framework to help illuminate why the term "food desert" is problematic.

You can find the link to the interview here: <https://foodtank.com/news/2020/05/ladonna-sanders-redmond-on-the-importance-of-co-ops/>

Racial Equity Resources from Food Solutions New England

This is an incredible resource from [Food Solutions New England](#) that the Life Around the Table staff has been using the last few months to educate ourselves about our whiteness, the legacy of racism in the US, and how it has shaped the food system. We began with their 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge, but while we didn't stick to the schedule, we've continued to read, watch, and learn from the resources they've pulled together.

Here is the link to the daily challenges (<https://fsneequitychallenge.org/>), which FSNE encourages people to follow at whatever pace they can. Each day leads you through a topic and reflection questions with options depending on how much time you have. They also lead you to action steps you can make along the way.

FSNE also has resources grouped thematically here (<https://foodsolutionsne.org/racial-equity-challenge-resources/>).

Feel free to share what sources you are learning from. Are there books, articles, movies, podcasts, etc. that you would recommend?

"The Moment for Food Sovereignty is Now"- May 28, 2020

As a follow up to the article I shared last week ([The Great Farm Box Boom](#)), here is another article about how people are adapting to the challenges our food system is facing right now from Civil Eats. It highlights the work that has already been going on to secure food sovereignty in marginalized communities long before the pandemic, like Soul Fire Farm's "Soul Fire in the City" program, and how their work continues to be connected to their liberation.

I really liked how Nate Kleinman, founder of Experimental Farm Network, comments that as people seek to secure their own wellbeing in this uncertain time, it'll only be truly successful if they work for the wellbeing of their whole community.

Here's the link to the article: <https://civileats.com/2020/04/02/the-moment-for-food-sovereignty-is-now/?fbclid=IwAR2VRgS-b0rLEMzXhD3rFXqZ5PpgNf18qY0c1L6iG1ovth9RsWi-wN3XbLg>

(I encourage you to explore the article's many hyperlinks! They connect to so many more great articles and organizations doing good work)

Did you learn something new from this article? Have you heard of or are you a part of cooperative gardening where you live?

Using Community Connections to Feed Students- April 23, 2020

In the last several weeks, I've been encouraged by the way many communities have creatively continued to meet their neighbors' needs despite these troubled times. Here is an example I came across from eastern North Carolina where a church adapted its summer food program to assist students, their families, and local businesses now.

<https://www.ednc.org/using-community-connections-to-feed-rural-students-when-schools-are-closed/>

I'm struck by the pastor's statement: "There's all these connections in the community that are already present. It's just we don't always see them, because of our busyness or because of our biases, or whatever. And all I've done, all Abundance does really, is it makes those already present connections more visible."

How have you seen more clearly the ways your community is connected in the last few weeks? What examples of neighborly support have particularly encouraged you?

Health is Membership with Grace Hackney- May 7, 2020

Last month, the [Health is Membership](#) podcast series released their interview with [Grace Hackney](#). The podcast series is a commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Wendell Berry's essay "Health is Membership," and an extended reflection on what Berry's ideas of health and community mean for us today and into the future. In this episode, Grace shares part of her story, how God has called her over the years to rethink the ways our churches eat and form community.

Here is the link to the podcast (43 mins): <https://health-is-membership-25-years-later.simplecast.com/episodes/grace-hackney>

Towards the end of the interview Grace says, "I wonder if as leaders in faith traditions we don't also have a responsibility to help people know that they have choices.... That [as faith leaders] we advocate and model different kinds of ways that we can think about health and about dying, that as leaders in the church we allow people to know that they can ask questions and that they can say no...."

Certainly during this pandemic, many parts of our lives and our world are being questioned - our food system being just one piece of that.

How does your faith inspire you in this process of reimagining how our communities eat and live together? What images, scriptures, teachings, practices, or traditions, come to mind?

Reimagining the Human Place in Nature with Robin Wall Kimmerer- April 30, 2020

I first read Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, a few years ago. She is a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Her work has helped me expand my understanding of community to include my nonhuman neighbors (plants, animals, land, water, and sky) and to imagine how to be in better relationship to them with gifts of gratitude and reciprocity.

[Here is a recorded conversation](#) between her and Union Theological Seminary in New York City from February 2019 on reimagining the human place in nature. The whole conversation is about an hour and a half, but if you don't have that much time, I recommend just listening to her opening remarks (about 24 mins starting at the 8 min mark).

What stands out to me most as I listen is how full of presence the world seems in Kimmerer's descriptions. The world isn't made up of "its" and "whats," but of "whos" who have their own gifts and knowledge to offer. That makes a big difference for me in how I imagine my responsibility to the communities that I'm a part of.

What thoughts stay with you as you listen to this conversation? How would you characterize your relationship to the nonhuman members of your communities?