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SAVE THE DATE: FOOD WASTE WEEKEND 2016
Weekend of September 23-25, 2016 Set Aside For America's Clergy
Across The Faith Spectrum To Give Sermons On Food Waste

Newfoundland NJ – (August 10, 2016) –

Food Waste Weekend (#FoodWasteWeekend) – a nationwide opportunity for the faith community to learn about and address the waste of food in America – has been announced by AmpleHarvest.org in partnership with GreenFaith for September 23-25, 2016.

America wastes a staggering \$218 billion worth of food every year. This exacerbates other critical issues including hunger, the environment and diet related diseases. While a great deal of money is spent trying to deal with these issues individually, it is easier and less expensive to reduce a major root cause – the waste of perfectly wholesome and edible food.

According to AmpleHarvest.org's founder and executive director Gary Oppenheimer, "for the past 10 years, an increasing number of 'foodies', non-profits, government officials and others have been seeking to tackle the issue of food waste in America. One critical group – the faith community – has been up to now largely absent from the conversation. We realized that since 70% of America's food pantries are located in a house of worship and are critical partners in helping that excess food get to hungry families, we should invite the clergy of all major faiths to learn, and then speak from their own faith perspective, about food waste."

Clergy nationwide are enthusiastic about the event. Rev. Jacob Bolton of New York noted that "Food Waste Weekend addresses the complex, global issue of food waste and overconsumption, with tangible, local, and spiritually cultivating practices any faith community can undertake. The possibilities surrounding this weekend are sundry and full of hope. This is the invitation faith communities have been looking for." His sentiments were echoed by Rabbi Joshua Ratner from Connecticut: "I think this is a fantastic, modern opportunity for people of all faiths to actualize the biblical injunction to share the gleanings of our fields with those in need. Donating our food surplus, rather than throwing it away, is something we can all be proud of. I hope all houses of worship of all faiths will participate."

Information about the issue of food waste, faith-specific sample sermons, newsletter bulletins and more will be available to clergy who sign up at www.FoodWasteWeekend.org. They will be then be able to choose from variety of "calls to action" based on the type of engagement their congregants will be most responsive to. Examples include using shopping lists to reduce the impulse buying of food that may never get consumed, finding a nearby food pantry at www.AmpleHarvest.org that's eager for excess garden produce, or even helping their employer find ways to reduce food waste in the office or cafeteria.

“Our goal is to help the faith community learn about food waste solutions.” noted Oppenheimer. “Solving food waste helps to reduce hunger and malnutrition and helps the environment as it reduces the waste stream, climate change, and the loss of water and energy used to grow/produce and ship the food”.

Key beneficiaries of Food Waste Weekend will be food pantries nationwide that, thanks to AmpleHarvest.org, will be able to receive food, especially locally grown food, that otherwise would have been lost to waste.

Rev. Ben Collins of Florida adds “Pastoring a congregation with a deep social conscience means issues like hunger, waste, and environmental impact are front and center. They are integral not only to religion, but humanity, which we believe makes the responsibility profoundly sacred.”

Food Waste Weekend materials at www.FoodWasteWeekend.org were specifically designed for Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Unitarian communities although other faiths are welcome to adapt them for their use. Clergy are urged to mark September 23-25 on their calendars for giving a sermon on the waste of food and should further encourage the congregants to come to learn about how reducing food waste can help them better follow their faith traditions, save money at the grocery store and help improve the health of both themselves and the planet.

“Over 800 million people are going hungry every day. The food we’re wasting creates a massive carbon footprint. We’ve got to change. Food Waste Weekend is an extraordinary vehicle for empowering the people of diverse faiths to address these critical issues. We look forward to congregations around the country getting involved” noted Rev. Fletcher Harper, executive director of GreenFaith.

About AmpleHarvest.org:

AmpleHarvest.org, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501c3 organization which works to diminish food waste and hunger in America by educating, encouraging and empowering growers to easily find a local food bank eager to receive the excess garden bounty. Follow AmpleHarvest.org at twitter.com/AmpleHarvest and at Facebook.com/AmpleHarvest.org. For more information, visit www.AmpleHarvest.org/presskit or call AMPLE-6-9880 (267-536-9880).

About GreenFaith:

GreenFaith is an international, interfaith environmental organization that inspires, equips and mobilizes diverse faith communities for environmental action. Through creative campaigns, values-based advocacy, and initiatives that help faith groups walk their environmental talk, GreenFaith helps faith communities put their beliefs into action for the earth. More information is available at www.greenfaith.org. Contact Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director, for further information at revfharper@greenfaith.org.

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